

THE FUGITIVE

EZRA S. BRUDNO

P. H. Greenlaw.

The Fugitive

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*Being Memoirs of a Wanderer
in Search of a Home*

"Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest!"

—BYRON

BY
EZRA S. BRUDNO



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TO
Dr. Emil M. Brudno
THIS BOOK IS
MOST AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

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SCENES

Book I.—LITHUANIA

Book II.—SOUTHERN RUSSIA

Book III.—NEW YORK

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

YUDEL ABRAMOWITCH, a Jew accused of having murdered a Christian child for ritual purposes

ISRAEL, his son, a vagrant orphan, the "Fugitive"

GORGLE and GAZLEN, schoolmasters of the school for the poor

ALEXIS BIALNICK, a judge

KATIA, the judge's daughter, with whom Israel is in love

SHMUNKE MENKE SHMUNKE's, a fanatic student of theology

MENKE and GROONE, Shmunke Menke Shmunke's parents

RABBI BRILL, principal of Javolin Seminary

MIRIAM, his young wife

EPHRAIM RAZOVSKI, an idealist and revolutionary student

NOSEN TAKIFF, an innkeeper

MALKE, his daughter

COUNT LOSJINSKI, owner of the inn

ADOLPH DOLGOFF, a forger of Russian pamphlets

DAVID LEVANDO, owner of a "sweat-shop"

DANIEL, his son

MARK FETTER, an unscrupulous New York merchant

DOCTOR FUCHS, a reform rabbi

JOSEPH GAVNIACK, a hypocritical missionary

MARTHA, his mistress

BOOK THE FIRST
DARKNESS

“ He hath set me in dark places, as they
that be dead of old.”

—LAMENTATIONS.

THE FUGITIVE

CHAPTER I

I LOSE MY FATHER

AS I dip my pen to begin the narrative of my life, the heavy curtain of time rises and scenes of early childhood crowd my memory. I am back again in far-away Lithuania; and I see, as clearly as the paper before me, my native town with all its rural squalor. It is one of the commonplace, insignificant Lithuanian towns: with thatched log-houses set along unpaved muddy streets and stenchy alleys; with a weather-worn brick synagogue and a high-peaked old Greek church; with a ruinous public bath-house and a well-fortified jail; with a pond in which boys and cows alternately bathe in summer and on which the former skate in winter; with a tall black cross standing somberly in the centre of the market-place; with a hissing water-mill (which is regularly flooded every spring) at one end of the town, and a long-armed windmill (which almost as regularly burns down every winter) at the other end; with encompassing bluish-green forests, waving wheat-fields, and blossoming orchards—in short, but for the last, old, dirty, lethargic, typically Lithuanian.

However, as a hint to lovers of chronological research, I shall state that in the place where I first saw light, the famous Corsican, in his escape from cold Russia, is said to have changed horses. So, after all, my native town deserves a place in the world's history almost as important as that accorded to Austerlitz. For if chance had ordained otherwise and the great conqueror had not found speedy trotters in my birthplace, think what a change in the nineteenth century!

But enough of the Corsican. Let me return to the Lithuanian, however disparaging to the warrior. As the reader will presently learn, my name, Yisroel (the Hebrew for Israel), had many variations. Its diminutive was Ishrolke, which for convenience sake was shortened to Shrolke. This my school-mates thought still too long, so my name among them was Shroll. Frequently I was endearingly called Yisroltchikle, Isroltchick, or Isrolkele.

Recalling this little old town and the names by which I was known there, the past bursts before me like a shell, and my mind fills with memorable events of my early life. Some of these events are vague and fragmentary, like half-forgotten dreams, and others stand out most vividly, as if they had occurred but yesterday. How I remember the Passover of my fifth year! It appears to me like a cloud with a silvery seam.

The day before this Passover was the happiest of my childhood. I see myself standing on the long,

balustered porch, watching a bird that skipped from poplar to poplar in front of my father's house. The thick ice that had covered the earth for more than five months had almost entirely melted, and was flowing in broad crystal streams and bubbling beneath a fine glacial sheet which was not as yet washed away. Here and there the bits of bare earth, like so many tiny islands, looked black and spongy, and were slowly drying under the piercing glances of the sun. But I was soon lured into the house: the rattling of dishes fell on my ears like sweet music. I ran into the kitchen. All the dishes and cooking utensils that had been used during the year were carried to the attic, and new plates, pots, and pans, which had laid packed in hay since the preceding Passover, were cleansed and polished. While these preparations were being made I was running about the house in boisterous mirth, and in my repeated efforts to make myself useful I broke sundry articles. My mother scolded softly, and, smiling all the while, gently removed me from the servants' way. To hide my embarrassment I dipped the new tumbler into the "Passover tank" and swallowed a mouthful of the delicious "Pass-over water." Then my father appeared in the doorway and said: "Come, my child; I have something nice for you." I followed him to the adjoining room, where I was presented with an Arba-Kanfas, the fringes of which my father had taken great delight in tying in the traditional knots and twists.

As he handed me this "four-corner" garment he said in Hebrew: "Wear it that ye may remember, and do all my commandments and be holy unto your God."

Then came the Seder—the ceremony of the first evening of Passover. Our dining-room was illuminated by scores of candles stuck in antique chandeliers hung from the ceiling. At the head of the table sat my father, robed in a white shroud-like garment, leaning on his left arm and reading from a book. An embroidered skull-cap was tilted on the back of his head, leaving bare his high and broad, smooth forehead; and his genial countenance was beaming with good-humour and happiness as he glanced at his small family. As I now think of it, it seems to me that I could read his very thoughts as he passed his fingers through his black beard: "Behold, thus shall man be blessed that feareth the Lord."

My mother, with diamonds twinkling at her ears, read the Hagodo (the tale of Israel's bondage and exodus) as fast as she could in order to catch up with father, pausing only now and then to point out to me the illustrations of the ten plagues and that of Pharaoh sinking into the sea. At the sight of these pictures I clapped my hands in gleeful satisfaction over the punishment this tyrant, the oppressor of my forefathers, had received from the mighty hand of Jehovah.

But the happiness we felt was not unmixed;

with it there was some hidden sorrow. My brother Joseph, who was about twelve years my senior, was absent from the table. There had always been some differences between my father and him, and of late the breach widened on account of my brother's intimacy with the Sledevatel,* against whom my father held a number of overdue promissory notes. However, despite the rupture, my mother entertained an unspoken hope that he come home this night to join in the Passover feast; and when, later in the evening, there came a sound of steps without, she rose eagerly and whispered: "Joseph is coming."

"It is not Joseph's step," my father answered gloomily.

A moment later the door opened and two officers entered. My father rose and saluted them in a courteous though hesitating manner. "What brings you to my house at this hour, Feodor Ivanowitch?" my father asked of the superior officer.

My mother trembled perceptibly, and said to my father in an undertone: "Something must have happened to Joseph."

"I am on a bad errand this evening," was the short reply of the *gendarme*, given with a look which made plain that it was not my brother who was the occasion of the visit.

* A Russian officer filling the position of our grand jury and that of the coroner.

My father paled at the glance. Now as I write I can see him before me, robed in a loose white shroud, a fearful stare in his shrewd blue eyes, his right hand clutching the girdle around his loins as he staggered back a step or two. I clung to my mother's skirt and looked at the *gendarmes* in trembling fright.

"Really, Yudel Abramowitch," said the superior of the two *gendarmes*, "it is the most unpleasant duty of my life to be compelled to read an indictment to you." And he turned his eyes away from my father's.

"An indictment! Against me?" my father cried.

My mother burst into tears and wrung her hands hysterically; and I, though comprehending no real cause for grief, joined in her wailing.

The officer drew a writ from his upturned sleeve, and after reading the caption and legal rigmarole he recited in a firm voice: "You, Yudel Abramowitch, are hereby accused and must answer to the charge of being complicated in the ritual murder of Andrew, a Christian child."

My father did not say a word; he raised his hand to his forehead and emitted a deep groan. A minute or more of silence ensued, during which my father looked as if he were struggling to regain his wits. He cast a dazed, helpless glance at mother, then at me.

The *gendarmes* interchanged communicative signs;

then one of them said gruffly: "Come, you'll have to hurry!"

My father fell on my mother's neck and wept bitterly, and after pressing me to his breast and wetting my cheeks with his tearful kisses, he raised his hands heavenward and cried: "My enemies have set a trap for me, but the Infallible Judge knows my heart—knows my innocence. He will not see justice perverted."

The officers made no reply, but led him away bowed and sobbing. And all that night, I remember, we sat there beside the richly spread table, I held closely in my mother's arms and she moaning convulsively all the while.

My father was not the only one arrested that night. Nine of the oldest and most prominent members of the Jewish community were also thrown into jail on the same charge. And the following morning the startling fact was learned that my brother Joseph and a peasant who had once been my father's coachman were the prosecuting witnesses. The *prima facie* evidence was strong enough without their testimony, as the body of the murdered child had been found hidden in the ark among the Scrolls of the Law. Special mass was held a number of times, and fasts were proclaimed, but even the most hopeful could see no relief for my father, since his own flesh and blood testified against him.

Little of consequence happened immediately after my father's imprisonment. My brother never came

back to us, and I learned from our servants that he was living with the Sledevatel and that he was going to be baptised and marry his niece, who was reputed one of the handsomest girls in our vicinity. In our house everything looked dreary and forsaken: my mother went about with a grief-stricken face, the servants walked on tiptoe, and everybody who visited us seemed but to enhance our sadness. Our most frequent visitor was Mr. Nicholaieff, a lawyer, to whom my mother occasionally gave a roll of money, which he would pocket without counting, and always with the remark that he hoped to be able to "grease the officials' paws."

Months rolled by, and still no definite time was set for the trial of the prisoners. The prospects of their release brightened, however, when a rumour started that my brother had run away to parts unknown. A fast was proclaimed, and the lawyer, Nicholaieff, got another big roll of money with which to "grease the officials' paws." Then, when everything looked promising, we were stricken down with the report that my father had been found hanging in his cell, and, what was still more terrible, that he had left a written confession of his sole guilt.

The other prisoners were instantly released. To us who still believed in my father's innocence the mystery of the ritual murder became darker and darker; and the bitterest gloom settled closer and closer about my mother and me.

CHAPTER II

I AM LEFT ALONE IN THE WORLD

AFTER this tragic end of my father a great and rapid change took place in my mother. Her noble Semitic face became shrunk and sallow and wrinkled, and her soft bright eyes, dimmed with weeping, lost their gentle luster. All our money and valuables had gone to "grease the officials' paws," so at my father's death we were literally penniless. With the exception of our large house, which was heavily encumbered, every possible means to maintain our previous comfortable style of living was exhausted. It is true, the community was kind enough to offer her some assistance, but she cried many days thereafter, and said she would rather starve than become an object of charity. So she bought a cow and sold its milk, and in order to make both ends meet, from time to time my mother sold pieces of furniture from our home.

Thus autumn and winter passed and spring came again. I was kept in a private school, at the cost of how much self-denial on the part of my mother I did not then understand. However, I noticed that my mother grew weaker and weaker during this time, and at length she took to her bed. Then

there came an evening which is as memorable to me as the evening on which my father was torn away from us. The sun had already dipped into the forest that encircled the town; the stroke of the sexton's mallet had just sounded—the signal for “sunset service”; and the shades were beginning to fall. I stood by the window looking out into our bit of a garden; from behind me there came frequently the coughs and groans of my mother.

“Yisroelke, my child,” sounded the feeble voice of my mother.

I turned and hurried to her bed. There was scarcely a tinge of blood in her emaciated cheeks; her dim eyes were overrun with tears. I wondered why she shed tears; our neighbours had been so good to us—had brought us every morning boiled chicken, fresh milk and flowers, and the beautiful boxes and vials that stood on the window-sill—and yet she wept!

“Kiss me, my darling,” she whispered.

I kissed her hand first, then rising on tiptoe I pressed my lips to her chin, which was moist from her weeping.

“I may soon go away,” she said with an effort, “and you will be left alone—alone.” Her spasmodic cough checked her words.

I could not clearly see how she could go away when she was scarcely strong enough to move about.

Here, my child,” she resumed painfully a

moment later, handing me our Old Testament, dog-eared and yellow with age, "keep this always with you. This is all I can leave you. When you get older, my child, you will read it; and when despair comes to you, you will also read it and gain courage. This is all your father had when he started in life; this is all you can leave to your children, and this is all they will leave to their offspring, to the end of the race."

A peculiar look spread over my mother's countenance as she spoke these enigmatic words; a magic luster seemed to brighten her dim eyes.

After resting a little while she continued more easily, as if the words she had just spoken had greatly relieved her, "Yisroelke, if you ever meet your brother"—there was a painful pause—"remind him of this book. Let him read these pages. He will learn that there is nothing to be ashamed of in his lineage, and will come back to our fold."

Early the next morning I was wakened by sobbing and wailing. I raised my head and glanced at my mother's bed. It was empty. I dressed in haste and hurried to the dining-room. In the middle of the floor lay a figure, covered with my mother's quilt. Two flaring candles stuck in our silver candlesticks stood at one end of it. Sitting on the floor around the figure were several women, who constantly raised their voices in lamentation; a number of elderly women were measuring long

strips of linen and stitching them together; and a score of boys chanted psalms in a monotonous minor key.

I looked bewilderingly about the room. Then, affected rather by the general grief than by any definite realisation of its cause, I burst into tears and wept bitterly.

At first no one tried to console me, but when the women had finished the white garment an old man came up to me and said: "Stop crying, Isroelchickle [this was his version of my name], and come outside."

Outside there was also a crowd of people. A little man moved through the crowd crying "Zdoko! Zdoko!" at the highest pitch of his cracked mezzo-soprano voice, at the same time shaking a tin can that contained a few rattling coppers. "Zdoko! Zdoko!" he shrieked persistently; and the bystanders, as he passed them, dropped coins of small value into the contribution box that he shook beneath their faces.

In response to a cry at the door, those who stood nearest the porch crowded back, and the figure I had seen lying on the floor was carried out. But as the pall-bearers were going to lift the bier, one of the elders of the community raised his hand to command attention, and said in a grave tone, "Rabaci [my superiors], now is the time to do something for the orphan."

All eyes were turned upon me. I tried to control

myself, but the tears continued to flow against my will.

"To the best of my knowledge," the venerable man continued, "the boy has no relatives in whose care we can place him. It is incumbent upon the community to do all it can for him until he is old enough to provide for himself. As there is not a penny left by his mother, I suggest that the orphan be right now supplied with 'days.' At my house he will have Fridays and Saturdays."

Within a few minutes Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays had been offered, and they were one week.

The pall-bearers lifted their burden and the procession started. A long train of men and women followed the bier with bowed heads, and a great number of boys chanted mournfully: "Righteousness walks before her." Before now I had vaguely understood on what journey my mother had gone, but now I realised that she had gone never to return, and that I was left all alone in the world.

CHAPTER III

THE SCHOOL FOR THE POOR

My people were very ingenious in naming things; they would rarely permit themselves to call a spade a spade. For instance, the custom of poor boys getting certain meals regularly in certain well-to-do homes was called "eating days"; an invitation of a poor man to dine with his rich co-religionist on the holy Sabbath was disguisedly entitled "plat" (a corruption of "billet"); the graveyard was, perhaps cynically, spoken of as the "house of the living"; and a charitable house for the poor was commonly designated as the Hekdesh (sanctuary). So when "Jacob the Beadle" came up to me a few days after my mother's death and told me to go with him to the Talmud-Torah, I understood without a moment's hesitation that I was going to be enrolled, not in a theological seminary, as the name might indicate, but in the school for the poor.

The Beadle had a quick step, and I toddled along as fast as I could. At the sight of the ancient-looking, weather-worn, red-brick synagogue, with a rickety outside staircase that led to the women's chapel, my heart began to throb with premonitory fear, for I knew that the women's chapel was

also the Talmud-Torah. We pushed our way through scores of ragged, barefoot boys who were rolling in the sandy yard below the stairs, and struggled up the stairway through dozens of other little wretches who laughed and shouted as they wrestled, fought, and played pranks upon each other.

I remained standing gloomily just within the door while the Beadle carried on a whispered conversation with one of the teachers, who all the time was blinking his watery-blue eyes and stretching his neck, like a goose after taking a mouthful of water. The room in which I found myself was high and spacious, but was most slovenly kept. At each end stood two tallow-smeared tables placed at right angles, and upon crippled benches beside these sat boys of all ages and sizes, their heads covered. Dog-eared prayer-books and tattered Bibles were promiscuously scattered over the dirty floor. Coal-drawn caricatures and sketches disfigured the once whitewashed walls, now brown from age where not black from charcoal; and wheels of spider-webs slightly oscillated around the corners. The odour of mildew was almost suffocating.

His talk with the teacher ended, the Beadle turned to me. "This will be your school, Isroel-chickle," he said kindly; and then he bade me be good and departed, leaving me to begin my new life.

I did not leave my place by the door where he

had left me. I was naturally very shy, and the appearance of this schoolmaster filled me with foreboding. So, fearing to move, I stood nervously against the wall, waiting till I was told to take a seat.

"Zalmen, what do you call the letter with a head and neck of a goose standing on one leg?" asked the teacher, continuing with the lesson which our entry had interrupted. His name was Getzel, but he was better known as Gorgle on account of his habit of constantly craning his "gorgle," which is Yiddish for larynx.

"A lamed [Hebrew "l"]," the boy nearest him answered in a small piping, tremulous voice.

"Find one!" ordered Gorgle, stretching his neck awkwardly and rolling his bulging eyes with impatience.

The youngster hesitated, and his searching eyes and fingers wandered over the book before him. Finally he pointed at the similitude of a goose standing on one leg.

"And what do you call the one like a worm with little wings?"

"An aleph," returned the boy.

"Silence! Silence!" Gorgle shouted, aroused by the general din, and rolled his eyes threateningly.

For an instant my attention left the teacher and fastened upon the boys around the nearest table, who were showing a peculiar interest in me. Some were rolling their eyes and projecting their lips,

others were thrusting out their tongues, and still others were twisting their faces into all sorts of wry designs.

One of those who sat farthest away from the instructor, taking advantage of a moment when the schoolmaster's back was turned, put his thumb to the point of his snub nose, and spreading his fingers in the shape of a turkey's tail made big eyes at me. This welcome caught the notice of the class, and all joined in a sniffing, mocking chuckle.

"Who started this laughter?" thundered the stoop-shouldered, red-bearded schoolmaster, turning around quickly. He looked with fierce inquiry into each poverty-stamped face.

A sudden hush fell upon the pupils.

"Who started this giggling, I ask you?" repeated Gorgle, picking up the leather thongs that lay at his elbow.

The silence became even more intense.

"Who laughed first, I demand of you?" he shouted with more vehemence.

The little wretches turned pale and trembled with fright. A long-drawn snore broke the dreadful silence. All faces turned in the direction of the slumberer. The snub-nosed boy who had made fun of me a little while before sat with his head thrown back, the visor of his torn cap dangling loosely alongside his right ear, his hands resting on the table before him, and snored as naturally as if he were dreaming of Jacob's ladder.

The teacher descended upon the offender and furiously swung the pliant thongs about the head, face, and hands of the little jester. When he had so exhausted himself that he could flog no longer, he threw the thongs upon the table and collapsed in his chair, ghastly pale, and out of breath.

His stormy eyes lighted upon me. "Why are you standing there like a clay dummy?"

Terrified by his fierce voice, I quickly sat down upon the edge of a long bench. My tears once more nearly overflowed.

Notwithstanding the severity of Gorgle's punishment, the snub-nosed jester was not yet subdued. As I sank trembling upon the bench he looked at me and bleated like a young sheep. The class, having recovered from its fright, again roared with laughter. The schoolmaster turned white; a cloud seemed to overspread his hollowed cheeks and furrowed forehead. Like an enraged cat he started for the wag, but as he raised the thongs his velvet skull-cap, which (as I was afterward informed) had been given to him as a wedding-present a score of years before, slipped off his head and fell to the floor. Another laugh broke out at sight of the glossy pate of the master, which was exposed in all its fullness as he stooped to recover the cap. As he arose the greasy head-gear dropped from his nervous hand, and the laughter grew more uproarious. "Snub-nose" bleated again, another pupil mewed like a cat, another lowed like an ox, and several more

whistled in chorus and stamped their feet while Gorgle's head was moving about under the table in search of his wedding-present.

The schoolmaster placed his recovered cap on his head, and without saying a word he motioned the boys on one of the benches to get off it and move it aside. The miserable culprit divined his fate and began scratching his head and crying. Still silent, Gorgle soaked the thongs in water for a few minutes, all the while casting revengeful glances at the whining little fellow. When he thought the heavy straps soft enough, he took the handle of the thongs between his teeth, and seizing the screeching victim by the loose part of his tattered breeches he clasped him between his bony knees and stripped him half-naked, gasping as he was struggling with his pupil: "I'll show you how to mock your teacher!" Then Gorgle threw the screaming urchin upon the bench, and motioning to me said: "Hold his feet."

I felt helpless and tears rushed to my eyes; the boys looked at me threateningly; I shivered with fear and fingered a buttonhole of my coat.

"You hold his feet, I say!" commanded Gorgle.

My reply was a flood of tears.

"Will you do what I tell you or——" He made a threatening gesture.

I did not budge and my tears flowed faster.

The schoolmaster released his victim and seized me. My hands were twisted behind me. I shrieked; I struggled; I shouted for help; my face went down,

up, and again down; one button of my breeches burst, another rolled down into my sock; I was overpowered; I felt my back bare; I protected with my hands—then cut! cut! cut! the thongs came down upon my bare skin at the rate of two a second, and—thank God!—Gorgle was again exhausted. “Now you’ll know how to mind your teacher!” he panted, and released me.

“Take your seats!” he ordered in a tremulous voice, turning upon the class. “I’ll flay the hides off your carcasses, you rascals, villains, you worthless creatures! Your benefactors pay their hard-earned money for your tuition and bread, and in the end, you leeches, you”—he paused for want of an appropriate word—“you don’t care who pays me to drum God’s words into your blockheads. He! [This to himself.] I’ll teach them how to behave in Talmud-Torah.”

He wiped the perspiration off his face with a large coloured handkerchief, all the while panting audibly. “And all on account of this snot,” he burst out again, with his eyes fixed on me. “You go there.” He pointed to the other end of the room. “You belong to the other class.”

Arranging my disordered clothes, and sobbing brokenly, I dragged myself to the other end of the room.

The class to which I was assigned was known as the Gemoro (Talmud) section. The Gemoro school-master took in my tear-stained face with a single

stern glance and ordered me to a seat opposite him at the foot of the long table. I shivered as my eyes caught his. Gorgle was a harmless fly as compared with this instructor. His name was Shlomka, but he, like his associate, was known by his habits, so he was called Gazlen, whose colloquial significance was murderer.

"Motke!" roared Gazlen, gnashing his teeth and clenching his fists. This exclamation was an admonishment to one of the twenty-two boys of his class who had whispered something to his neighbour.

"Go on!" Shlomka ground his teeth furiously at the one who had been interrupted in his recitation.

The poor boy, much confused, could not find the place where he had left off.

"Would that I had waited for your funeral, Rebenu-shel-Olam [Creator of the universe]! Why don't you go ahead with your lesson, you little imp?"

Gazlen's cold gray eyes moved about wrathfully as the poor little fellow was endeavouring to find the right place. Then they came back to the boy, and he clenched his teeth and seized the knotty stick that lay handy for use. "You go on, little devil, or I'll drive you like a nail into the wall—a—get!" He burst out anew, brandishing the stick over the boy's head.

The embarrassed pupil searched in vain for the desired spot; his eyes, I surmised, were dancing

over the page without seeing a word before him.

"Would that I had waited for your last breath, Heavenly Father!" And with this Gazlen gave the student a box on his ear. The pupil, however, did not betray a sign of pain; his beautiful expressive face grew scarlet, but a faint smile parted his well-shaped lips.

Gazlen raised the stick and made as if to strike the boy. "Ephraim, you will proceed or I'll break this stick on your head."

One of the pupils made an effort to point the place to the unfortunate Ephraim, but the ever-watchful Shlomka caught him in the act, and rising impetuously he rewarded the sympathiser unsparingly.

"*Nu*, Ephraim," Shlomka resumed, when he had given the other his due meed, "how long will I wait for you, dummy? What is Rav Shases's [one of the Talmudic jurists] decision—tender discharges the debt or not?"

I thought the teacher was trying to help him out.

"It does not discharge the debt," answered Ephraim.

Bang! bang! bang! The knotted stick rose and fell on the head of the boy jurist, and Gazlen emphasised each stroke: "It—is—about—time—for—you—to—know—that—according—to—Rabbi—Chiye—the—debt—is—not—discharged—and—

according — to — Rav Shases — the — debt — is — discharged.”

The rest of the day I spent in fearful thought as to what would become of me. At about eight in the evening school was out, and we went into the synagogue below for prayers. The boys ran down the stairs pell-mell, pushing and kicking one another, pulling the ears of the passersby, and seemed perfectly happy in their misery.

When prayers were over I recited the Kaddish (a prayer for the dead), which reminded me of my mother, and again the tears began to come. I can now hear my ringing voice in the echoing synagogue proclaiming Yisgadai V'Yiskadash so that I drew the eyes of the congregation to me. But I broke down in the middle and my clear notes were changed to sobs. The boys laughed; some even sneered at me. But one came up after Kaddish and made friends. And it was no other than Ephraim, on whose head Shlomka's stick had fallen with such energy in the morning.

After prayers some of the boys ran home, and those who had no homes went to their “days,” but Ephraim and I remained in the synagogue. He told me of his sordid childhood and no less miserable youth; he also was an orphan without kith or kin. Yet despite his present misery he did not complain; he even spoke jestingly of Shlomka's blows. He was about three years my senior and possessed more self-reliance than I, and he had what

seemed to me an extensive knowledge of the world. He was a ruddy, cheery boy, tall for his age, with a large crop of curly hair and a very prominent white forehead. In this institution of swarthy, sickly, ill-formed, ill-dressed boys Ephraim looked exotic.

When the evening advanced and the sexton began to put out the lights in the synagogue Ephraim asked me where I had my Tuesdays.

I told him.

"You are pretty lucky," he said somewhat enviously, with a smack of his lips. "Only the very best boys in the class or the Gabbai's [President's] favourites get such 'days' [here he smacked his lips again]—meat for dinner, eggs for supper, and frequently five copecks extra." He looked wistful a few seconds, then he added: "And where do you get your Wednesdays and Thursdays?"

I mentioned the names of my benefactors.

"Oh, my! A fellow could get rich on 'days' like these. They often give ten copecks instead of supper, and you could easily save nine."

We let the synagogue door bang behind us, and before we parted he said: "This is my worst 'day': potatoes in the morning, black bread and barley for dinner, luke [the gravy of herring] and bread for supper. They don't even give a glass of tea as dessert. Regular pigs, and they are very rich—Baril, the money-loaner."

He shrugged his shoulders and started for his

supper, but turned once to call: "Shrolke, you can sleep with me on the oven; there is plenty of room there. I like you. You are a good fellow."

My heart suddenly warmed over these words, and tears of joy rose to my eyes. I loved Ephraim dearly from that instant. It may be because he said I was a good fellow, but I am sure that I loved him with that pure, unselfish love which a homeless orphan gives to his first friend.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAYS OF THE TALMUD-TORAH

As I have previously intimated, I was in those early days of a very diffident disposition. The boys at school disliked me for my reserve, mistaking my melancholy shyness for pride. If it had not been for Ephraim, the only friend I had, the boys would have pilfered all my belongings and would probably have resorted to physical torture. But everybody feared him. He was the biggest and strongest of the boys, so naturally his word was law to them.

Time slowly healed the wound made by the death of my mother, and little by little I became accustomed to my new life of poverty—nay, more, I even began to be almost happy. Perhaps if it had not been my fortune to gain the friendship of Ephraim life would not have run so smoothly, but with him everything else was forgotten. Although we were quite different in mind and disposition, yet our souls seemed to cleave to one another. Hand in hand we would leave the town limits and lose ourselves in the far-stretching fields of blooming rye, waving wheat and oats, and hear the swishing of the supple stalks above our heads as we would run breathlessly through the swaying

crops, or sitting upon some promontory we would look miles away over endless expanses of growing grain, ridged by the tickling winds in wavelike folds, when everything seemed floating and swimming—the grass, the bushy leaves, the ears of grain, the flowery bloom—when everything swam in never-ending tides. Ephraim could imitate almost any voice, and he would often echo the cuckoo, whistle with flawless purity of the canary, or chirp as none but birds and Ephraim could do. Like little kittens we would roll over one another, wrestle, vie in throwing stones (of course Ephraim beat me every time), and yell in order to hear our echoes. I would shout myself hoarse in order to hear the resounding answer in the distant forest until Ephraim would put his hand over my mouth and hush me to silence. What did I not imagine those voices were! Echoes from another world, angelic voices, voices that descended from heaven like rolls of thunder.

My oriental imagination found infinite pleasure in the fanciful Prophets, and their inexpressible charm completely captivated my mystic mind. For though I began the study of Talmud that summer, I did not neglect the Bible. I applied myself zealously to the Prophets until I had committed to memory Isaiah, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Lamentations, and nearly all of the Psalms. My proficiency was soon rumoured about and I became an object of curiosity. People would

surround me in the synagogue and test my knowledge by reading a verse and asking me to give the next one, which I did without hesitation. Ephraim was proud of me, and the other boys hated me the more.

Dreaming and mystic by nature, I was made more so by my devotion to the Prophets. My mind had become so imbued with the historical scenes of the Bible that when I read a passage a vision of the event described would arise before me with all the vividness of reality. I would see the celestial, peerless poet and prophet, Isaiah, his flowing Asiatic garb thrown loosely over his shoulders, his dark bearded face and wandering eyes lifted heavenward, fearlessly pouring forth his fiery eloquence and foretelling the doom of nations; I would see the weeping prophet Jeremiah, his head bent down, supported by both his hands, sitting by the ruins of the Holy City and bewailing the downfall of his people and their sanctuaries—I would even fancy that I heard the Prophet's groans; I would see Ezekiel—the cabalistic dreamer and mystic—standing by the river of Chebar and beholding visions in the open heavens.

During this period I almost lived in the Books of the Prophets; their words were ever in my mind, their visions always reflected vividly in my imagination.

The summer passed and the Russian winter, with its hoary frosts and long nights, arrived. The

winter school hours were from nine in the morning till ten at night. Fragmentary scenes of the school arise in my mind. I see the schoolroom, sometimes overheated and sometimes shivering cold, but always close and reeking, with its lamps suspended on long wires from the ceiling, the windows thickly covered with ice and snow so it is scarcely possible to look through them, the floor thick with dirt, which keeps on accumulating and scarcely ever feeling the stroke of a broom; fifty or more boys cudgelling their brains over their obsolete studies, with their torn caps, through which their hair protrudes, and with torn boots, through which toes peep out, and which have been mended so often that there is almost nothing left to patch upon; and I see them munching crusts of bread, which they receive from the institution on the days when they have no "days," and saying parrotlike grace after swallowing the last mouthful, and wishing there had been a few bites more. And then I see the school at night. It is midnight. Outside, the winds are howling and chasing the drifting snow. I hear the gruesome noise in the flue. I am stretched on the warm Dutch oven, with Ephraim by my side, snoring complacently; the other boys lie on the narrow benches which stand against the walls of the Talmud-Torah, using their fists as pillows. I am sleepless. I raise myself on my elbows and glance about me. To my right is the erstwhile noisy synagogue—gloomy, awe-inspiring. The Ner-

Tomid (the perpetual light) is glimmering before the Oren-Kodesh (ark), casting its great shadow upon the wall. To my left is the large schoolroom, in which a small light is burning; the shadows of the suspended, slightly oscillating lamps appear like so many colossal spiders on the walls. What a babel of voices! Some of the children on the benches snore and groan and unconsciously make broken complaint against the world. There is a sudden shrieking and screeching. I know whose voice it is—that of “Yankle Snub-nose,” as we call him; he is a little, hammered-down, small-faced skinny boy whose size has been diminished by the constant pounding of the teacher. He has just moved this semester from Gorgle’s class to Gazlen’s, or rather from the former’s thongs to the latter’s cane. Nobody in the class knows as much about the inflexibility of Shlomka’s cane as does Yankle; only the other day it broke on his back. He is now probably dreaming that Gazlen is pulling his ears or that he is being flogged. Suddenly he stops; the snoring of the slumberers becomes louder and louder. Another sleepy voice is heard. “Zemach, give me one bite—a bite—a little bite. Hold it between your hands and see if I don’t take a little bite.” I hear the boy kick the bench; perhaps because he cannot get a “bite.” I hear several voices at once: “Hit him—hit him, you pig’s snout!” “I’ll knock the stuffing out of you!” “I only had one slice of bread and onion!” “Abii

[one of the Talmudic authorities] says it must be divided in halves!" "Ha! ha! ha! Catch him—catch him—ha [he rolled off the bench]!" And so I lie and think until I decide to pull the blanket over my head and wander away also to dreamland.

Another summer and another winter glided by, with the same monotonous "day-eating," sleeping on the comfortable Dutch oven, receiving of occasional raps from Shlomka's stick, diving in the Talmudic ocean, and soaring high, high into the spheres whither Isaiah, Ezekiel, and King David transported me. Although my physical being was confined within the narrow walls of the dirty Talmud-Torah, my fancy took flight to Mount Lebanon, Mount Meriah, to the realm of Judea, and sometimes descended to the Valley of Sharon, where I plucked the sweetest of roses. In our leisure hours Ephraim and I would read the "Menoras-Hamoer," a book abounding in legends and mystic tales, and other cabalistic books that told of devils and flying angels and seraphs.

The following summer Ephraim decided to leave the Talmud-Torah and go to some other town.

"Listen, Shrolke," he said to me one summer evening. "I am already a big boy, and I can read a page of Talmud without any assistance. Why should I stay here when I can go to any town and get 'days' and see the world?"

His words filled me with dismay. But I sym-

pathised with his desire to leave this place, so I agreed that his plan was a good one.

"But before I leave I must take revenge on Shlomka."

I hated the idea of vengeance. Besides, Shlomka was our teacher, and I thought he had a right to beat us. I begged Ephraim not to do any harm to the schoolmaster.

"Oh, you are like a girl—always afraid of everybody," he answered almost contemptuously. "Why did he pull your ears yesterday? Couldn't he tell you to sit down without slapping your face first?"

I was silenced.

The following morning, when Shlomka came to school, he found on the wall a coal-drawn cartoon of himself in the act of spanking a pupil.

The class was silent from fear, but satisfaction could be read in their countenances. The teacher glanced at the wall and then looked threateningly at his pupils. He was puzzled as to who was the perpetrator of this atrocious deed, but he did not hesitate. He began with the pupil nearest him and caned each in order until he had finished the round, and the whole class was screaming and writhing with pain. But as he was going to lay the stick aside he heard one whisper: "Shrolke did the work and everybody gets paid for it."

"Ha! You—you——" he burst out, bearing down upon me, with the stick raised ready to strike.

"You—you—you—you think you are like your brother, who betrayed his father for the smile of a Shikse [gentile girl], hey? You think you will also throw me into prison, hey? You think you will denounce me that I use Christian blood for the Passover, hey? You think you will get the Sledevatel against me, hey? You think I'll tip my hat for you, hey? You think you will —— on my head and I'll say 'thank you,' hey?"

With each "hey" there came a blow. But suddenly the stick was arrested; Ephraim had jumped behind Shlomka and seized his hand. "Stop beating him!" shouted Ephraim in a commanding voice. "He did not draw your picture on the wall. I did it."

Shlomka stood astounded; then the arteries on his forehead swelled till they looked like blue cords, and his face began to work ominously. We expected to see him fall upon this revolutionist and rend him.

But Ephraim was undaunted. "I am not your wife or any of these little cowards," he went on. "If you raise your hand on me I'll break your fat nose."

Shlomka made a move for the stick, which was trembling in Ephraim's hand. But he instantly reversed his apparent decision and sat down, shaking his finger at his pupil. "I'll not soil my hands on you, you rascal," Shlomka Gazlen said, panting and quivering. "The Gaboim [officers]

of the Talmud-Torah will settle my account with you."

Without saying a word, Ephraim broke Shlomka's stick on his knee and left the class.

He did not return until after evening service, when he came up to me and said in a whisper: "I am not done with him yet. To-morrow is my last day here, and I'll leave him a token of friendship."

On summer afternoons at about three o'clock Shlomka and Gorgle would grant their classes a recess of about half an hour, during which Shlomka would take a nap with his arms folded upon the table and Gorgle would go home to feed his goat. The next day Ephraim did not appear at school until this recess period. The boys were all out in the yard, and Shlomka was peacefully snoring, his beard spread out on the cracked, worm-eaten table.

"Hold this," Ephraim said to me in apparent haste, pulling a candle from his pocket.

I could not divine what was in his mind, but I did as he bade me.

He lighted the candle in my hand and said: "Come, quick."

I hesitated.

"Oh, you coward! Come!" he ordered angrily.

I followed with a leaping heart to where Shlomka sat asleep. Ephraim produced a piece of sealing-wax, melted it, and sealed Shlomka's beard to the table.

"To the 'Bloody Hill,' " he whispered as he ran out of the Talmud-Torah.

The picture of the teacher awakening and trying to raise his sealed beard from the table I leave to the reader's imagination.

At about the time Shlomka was probably arousing from his nap two boys stood on the "high hill" which overtowered my birthplace, clasped in each other's arms. The taller one smiled humorously, his face bright with the satisfaction of victory; the eyes of the smaller were filled with tears.

"We'll soon meet again," said the taller of the two hopefully, as he took up his little bundle.

"We'll soon meet again," echoed the smaller one weakly; and he watched the disappearing form of his only friend through tears that came faster than they could be wiped away.

CHAPTER V

"THE LITHUANIAN ERA"

AFTER Ephraim had left me I remained absolutely solitary in the midst of my wretched schoolmates. I hoped Ephraim would write to me, but weeks passed by without bringing me word. Then misfortune fell again, and I was again thrown out upon the world.

It was on the first day of the Jewish month of Allul, toward the end of the summer. It was a half-holiday and all the boys were out. I sat alone in the class-room before a big folio of the Talmud, my whole attention concentrated on a case in which "the defendant's ox gored the cow of the plaintiff, and it was found that the plaintiff's cow gave premature birth to its offspring; it being unknown whether the premature birth had occurred before or after the defendant's ox gored the plaintiff's cow. Defendant claims that it occurred before, and the plaintiff alleges that the birth was given after the goring and by reason thereof." Bright little jurist as I had become, it was quite a puzzle for me to extricate myself from the hair-splitting reasoning for and against the parties to this action.

Suddenly wild shrieks reached my ears: "Fire! Fire!"

Nothing is more terrifying to Lithuanians than fire. To these poverty-stricken inhabitants it means absolute destitution. Few have their property insured; most of them have nothing to insure but their decayed "four corners," as they call their hovels, for which they can scarcely spare the premium.

Every Lithuanian town is visited at least every twenty years by a destructive fire which literally wipes it out of existence, so that these disasters have become distinct epochs of each town's history. The Lithuanian calendar dates back to the first fire, the second, or the third.

At the terrifying cry, followed by the tolling of the sonorous fire-bell, I seized the Old Testament which my mother had left me, stowed it safely in my inside coat-pocket, and rushed in fright out of the Talmud-Torah. A vast volume of smoke swept over the school-yard. Before I was half-way to the original fire a score of houses were burning, and in an incredibly short time half the town was in flames.

I ran toward the market-place—a large open square which the fire could not reach. The streets were filled with frantic people. Men were groaning and shouting; women were wringing their hands and weeping bitterly; children, holding on to their mothers' skirts, cried and screamed; cattle roamed about, lowing and bellowing. Mothers rushed with

their children in their arms; men staggered under the heavy loads, which they carried to places of safety. Collisions were frequent and disastrous. Every one was trying to save his family and his own belongings. No one made any effort to put out the flames. The conflagration soared higher and higher; flickering streaks flashed from every side; broad blazes swept right and left, devouring as they went the straw-thatched log houses.

I reached the market-place. It was already crowded with heaps of furniture and other household goods, on top of which their owners sat on guard. By this time all the houses in town were ablaze, and a violent wind fanned the fire into embracing sheets of flame. Burning wisps of straw from the thatched roofs, and firebrands driven by the fierce wind, flew in the air meteorlike. The heavy timbers of the well-constructed houses fell with roars into the flaring *debris* beneath. Here and there a man tried to save his home by throwing on it pails of water, but all in vain. The town was doomed. So, shielding my face with my cap from the scorching heat, I ran toward the outskirts of the town.

The town was surrounded with a chain of hills, among which "Bloody Hill" was the most prominent. I ran diagonally across the fields, now laid waste by hundreds of trampling feet and by household goods scattered upon them, and I climbed to the top of "Bloody Hill." I seated myself upon a

huge rock which crowned the hill, and looked down upon my burning birthplace. The sky was clouded with heavy curtains of black smoke that overhung the whole region, and myriads of sparks and cinders flying around in this floating vault tinged it with burnished gold and crimson and dotted its zenith with constellationlike groups. All the people about me were weeping—poor mothers who foresaw starvation for the babies in their arms; marriageable maidens whose dowries were now gone and who were doomed to spinsterhood; fathers who had always been penned in the "pale" by Russian barbarity and could not clearly see by what miracle they would be able to rebuild their "four corners." I joined in the general grief. More than all of them I had occasion to mourn; for those poor people had friends and kindred to console one another. But whom had I? The Talmud-Torah burned down, my benefactors and "day" givers ruined—whither could I turn? I had no friend, no kindred, as if I were born of the rock I sat upon. My head fell between both my hands, and I wept until I could weep no more. In my fancy I compared this fire to that which reduced the Holy City to ashes, and like a little Jeremiah I sat by the ruins of my town and bewailed the loss of my people.

A few hours later the whole town, with the exception of a few houses in the outskirts, was transformed to an expanse of glowing ashes. Here and there mounds and hillocks of charcoal and ashes

belched forth spurts of flame. How small my birthplace looked—like a private graveyard!

But misfortunes never come singly, they say. It was not enough that we had lost our homes by fire; as darkness began to settle about our misery, soft rolls of thunder were heard. Soon drops of rain began to fall, and blinding flashes of lightning ripped across the black sky. In another minute the sky seemed to break open, and it rained as though another deluge had come upon us. What little had been saved from the fire was ruined by water. The people about me covered their heads with pails, pans, or boards, or sought shelter under tables and bedding they had saved. But I was so utterly despairing that I was indifferent to the downpour. Drawing myself together, I let the rain wash me clean.

CHAPTER VI

A NIGHT IN A FOREST

AFTER a time the rain ceased, the clouds broke, and the stars began to appear one by one, slowly, as if they shrank from looking down upon the misery below. I arose, but I was so stiff and numb that I could hardly stretch a limb. I began to walk, painfully at first, without the least knowledge where my feet were taking me. The darkness about me added gloom to my despair. I now felt more than ever that I was an orphan—a lonely child in the great egotistic world. Now and then, however, a star twinkled hope to me, and not infrequently a shrill cricket, leaping in the wet grass, seemed to offer me courage. Presently I found myself in the skirts of a forest; it was dense and deep—a genuine Russian forest. I recalled a little open space a few hundred yards within this forest, which had been my favourite resort on pleasant Sabbath afternoons. I had always loved the mighty solitude of the forest; there seemed to be a certain kinship to my weary melancholy. But now I remained standing with trembling fear. The moaning of the fire victims still rang in my ears; all the horrible stories of beasts and robbers I had heard in my childhood

haunted my brain. The least noise made my flesh creep. I advanced a step and stopped again. A wind swayed the boughs of a sapling and emitted something like a sigh, as if it were pitying the poor orphan standing near it. Then silence again. The large forest slept: all nature rested. I held my breath. I put my feet down softly and took the path that led to my favourite retreat. The clear moon, peeping through the thick foliage, escorted me step by step. On my way I annoyed a number of birds in their nests in bushes; their flutter of wings and twitter were perhaps complaints against me, but I also complained, and nobody heeded my grumbling.

At last I reached my favourite spot, and being utterly fatigued I stretched myself upon the long, soft grass and forgot all my troubles in dreamland.

I found myself on the peak of a high mountain, very high, almost reaching the clouds, with a staff, budding leaves and blossoming, in one hand, and in the other I had a musty-looking little book, like the one my mother had left me. Enchanting melodies reached my ears. I glanced down. At the foot of the height I stood upon there ran a broad stream, in which people rowed about in small barges; and across this flowing water stood a magnificent structure, the lower part of which resembled our synagogue and the upper looked like an ancient Grecian temple. A number of people stood in the doorway of this singular edifice and motioned to me to drop my burdens—the staff and the little

book—for they became heavy, yet they were dear to me, so I hesitated. The multitude below renewed their invitation, and the longer I hesitated the more demonstrative became the crowd. They began to threaten me that unless I drop my staff and book and come down willingly they would pull me down. But their threats gave me courage and lent warmth to my blood. Then the vociferous throng began climbing the slope of the mountain, yet I did not budge; I feared them not. They soon reached me and showered crushing blows upon me, but I did not care; I did not even attempt to return a blow. The staff and the book now became precious to me, and I pressed them to my breast with all my might. Hard as they pulled at the leaves of the book, they could not tear a leaf. The only injury it sustained was a little dirt from my perspiring hands in clasping it tightly. Then a hundred hands seized me and began pulling me down, but I suddenly felt my strength becoming herculean and I forced them all back, remaining in my lofty position and laughing them all to scorn.

In another instant the sun appeared resplendently. My bleeding wounds, which the mob had inflicted upon me, began to heal, and the blood in my veins now coursed warmer and swifter. I was feeling young again. I erected my stooped shoulders, straightened my bowed head, washed my bespattered face. Suddenly the crowd below reappeared; again the flowing stream at the foot of

the mountain; again the curious structure; but now the crowd below sent friendly greetings to me. Without hesitation I flung the staff and the book aside and began to descend the precipitous slope, when I lost my balance and rolled down, down, down, until—I awoke.

I sat down in the soft, moist grass and sleepily glanced about me. The day was just breaking. A gauzelike bluish mist hung over the forest, and the moisture of the night dripped, tip, tip, tip, from bough to bough, from leaf to leaf. Here and there pearl-like beads of dew, hanging on grass-blades, twinkled like diamond studs in green fleece. From the heart of the woods there echoed early morning sounds—the horn of a distant shepherd; the faint lowing of a cow; the bleating of a sheep; the lash of a whip like a ringing pistol-shot. Silence for a moment. I languidly rested on my elbow. A rustle above my head drew my eyes thither: a canary-finch skipped around restlessly, gently swinging the boughs of a tree. Then she began to sing. First her crisp sweet notes came in short warbles, but soon, as if heated by her own enthusiasm, her song swelled to a thrilling string of purling, quivering melodies. “*Tchi — tchi — tchi — tchiruck — tchiruck — tchi—tchi—tchi,*” another forest singer struck in; then followed the notes of the cuckoo, the bobolink, the chaffinch, as well as the chirping and whistling and humming and buzzing of all other birds and flying and creeping insects that help awaken the mighty

forest. This weird concert stirred all my senses and made me forget all else in the world. Every thrill jerked and tugged at my heart as if those dwellers of the woods had invisible strings attached to it.

But soon the disaster of the preceding day flashed through my mind. I realised anew that I was a friendless wanderer. Again I asked myself, Whither should I go? My native town was no more, and what did I know of the rest of the world? I thought of Ephraim—but where was he? At length I arose, washed my face in a little brook near by, dried it with my Arba-Kanfas, and started through the forest, giving myself blindly over to chance.

After a long walk, which almost exhausted me—for I had had nothing to eat since the previous morning—I faintly heard hilarious shouts. I turned into the direction from which the voices came, and soon found myself nearing the edge of the forest. Now the cries sounded very distinctly, "*Tu-ha! tu-ha! tu-ha!*" and I knew I was approaching a group of swineherds. My heart began to throb fretfully. I crept forward cautiously and peered from behind a bush. There were five of them, lying on their stomachs in the grass, with several lean and shaggy dogs stretched beside them. As I watched them they took up their pipes, made of willow bark, and in turn played their peasant melodies—sweet, eloquent, wild, yet how simple! One could read in their rustic airs their people's history, their character, their manners, their hopes

and aspirations. As they played they knocked their heels together as if beating time to their music, and their dogs, as if in a kind of ecstasy, rolled their tails and leaped about restlessly, opening and snapping their jaws, or barked at nothing in particular.

Envy filled my heart. I wished I, too, were a swineherd rolling over deep grass in the shade of trees and piping melodies. I wished I had never been born a Jew, but a gentile like these boys. "Is it not enough to bear the burden of man, that I must in addition bear the burden of the Jew?" I said to myself bitterly.

Despite the innocent happiness of these boys, I feared them as possible enemies. I was going to slip away unobserved, when I happened to think of Ephraim. "He is right—I am a coward," I said to myself. This reproachful thought lent courage to my nerves, and I stepped into the open and walked toward the swineherds.

They beheld me approaching them—a slim boy of fifteen, my untrimmed dark-brown hair hanging down my neck, the four fringes of my Arba-Kanvas dangling about me, hatless, coatless, my breeches tattered and patched, my boots so mended that the patches needed patches—ragged, hungry, exhausted. They beheld all this, yet they saw but one thing—the Jew.

"This is a Sjid [a slanderous name for Jew]," I heard one remark.

I was immediately surrounded by the peasant boys, among whom I stood half-paralysed with fear. They were dressed in unbleached linen shirts and in trousers of the same material. Their feet were bare, and their flaxen hair hung around their shoulders like fringes of raw hemp.

"Certainly a Sjid," said the biggest of them. "Can't you see his black breeches?"

"Give us cigarettes, you parasitical Sjid!" one of the swineherds ordered, and the rest joined in the demand, brandishing their whips in my face. I begged for mercy in the softest, most supplicating tone I could command. I had no cigarettes, I told them, and added that I was almost fainting from starvation.

"Then give us money for cigarettes, you devil of a Jew, Christ-killer, Judas, parasite!" all burst out at once, pressing closer about me and punching me with their whips.

I declared piteously that I had only a few coppers, which I would willingly give them for a piece of bread.

"Cigarettes or money!" all exclaimed. Several struck me with the butts of their whips, and I heard their whole vocabulary of vituperation against my race.

"Let me go!" I begged of them, feeling so weak that I could scarcely talk or cry.

The biggest of them tore off my Arba-Kanfas and kicked my shins, felling me to the ground, and

the others laid their whips over my body and face. "Give us money or cigarettes!" they shouted.

I put my hand in my pocket to pull out my last few coppers. But they were gone. I must have lost them in the woods.

They thought I was trying to deceive them and went through my pockets themselves. On finding nothing, the biggest one struck me in the jaw with his fist and said: "Give us cigarettes, anyhow, you Christ-killer!"

I could make no answer. My sight grew dimmer and dimmer and my head whirled. The last I remember of that incident are sharp cuts of whips, furious dogs jumping upon me, tearing at my already torn clothes, and the shrieking and whistling and laughing of the swineherds.

CHAPTER VII

I FALL AMONG GENTILES

I WAS in a stupor, half-waking, half-dozing, when my ear caught the sound of a voice. I wished to open my eyes, but I felt so fatigued and rested so pleasantly that I did not care to open them, as we often feel on a cool morning when the alarm-clock strikes to waken us. The faint sound became clearer and clearer—it seemed to me that the owner of the voice was drawing nearer to me until I could hear distinct words.

“He is stirring.”

This was not in a peasant’s dialect, but in pure Russian, which I was not accustomed to hear.

“Sh—sh!” another voice cautioned.

I opened my eyes, turning them one way, then another, and stared about me in amazement. “I must be dreaming,” I said to myself incredulously, as I glanced at the fine bed on which I lay and at the soft pillows and snow-white sheets, the like of which I had not seen since my mother died. I rubbed my eyes again and surveyed the room. It was spacious, with large windows on two sides, and its walls were hung with paintings and etchings. “How did I come here?” I asked myself. I recalled

my adventure with the swineherds, and I realised, though half-consciously, that a long period had intervened between that incident and the present, but I could not remember anything that took place during the lapse.

"How do you feel?" was asked of me in a soft feminine voice.

I only smiled in reply. I could not understand the meaning of all this; it recurred to my mind that perhaps I was dreaming, after all.

I said something in Yiddish, my mother tongue, but the people about me seemed not to understand it. Then a sickly looking woman asked me in Russian whether I wished for anything.

"I should like to know what happened to me and where I am," I responded in the peasant's dialect.

She smoothed my forehead and said gently: "Lie still. The doctor says you must have rest."

I closed my eyes again. Gradually my memory strengthened, and I began to trace back step by step to the time when I lost consciousness. I had a dim recollection of being taken in a carriage, of giving my name, and having suffered great pain, but the rest was a mist.

A few days later I was strong enough to sit up in bed propped up with pillows. How I had come here was now clear to me, thanks to the information of my good nurse.

Morovoyi Sudya (Justice of the Peace) Alexis Bialnick, the owner of the big forest in which I

spent the night after the fire, found me lying in the outskirts of the woods, half-naked and unconscious. Finding his own efforts to revive me of no avail, he ordered me to be taken to his home. As feeble as I was, I had a strong inclination to rise and leave the house. My benefactor was a gentile, his food was *trief* (ritually unclean), and I feared lest he should force me to baptism in compensation for his kindness. I had heard of such crafty proselytism, and besides, who had ever heard of a gentile showing disinterested kindness to a Jew? I remembered the warning written by my grandfather on the fly-leaf of the Testament my mother had left me, that we should shun gentile favours, because they would be invariably followed by loss or injury.

However, these prejudices weakened the longer I stayed in the house of the Sudya. He appeared to me like an angel coming to my rescue; and who could tell but that he was Elijah metamorphosed to the form of a *goy* (gentile)? My brain, always full of superstitions and trusting in miracles, easily credited the thought, and for a moment I held my breath.

One morning, after I had become able to move about the room, I was asked to step into the Sudya's study. He was seated in a large arm-chair and was in the act of tossing a rubber ball to a girl who had occasionally come into my room to ask after my health. My appearance interrupted her

from flinging it back, and faintly colouring she remained standing with hand uplifted.

"Good morning, my good little fellow," the Sudya said, turning his nervous soft gray eyes upon me. "I hope you are feeling better now"; and he smiled graciously.

I faltered some words of thanks.

The girl, standing with the ball in her hand, looked at me with curiosity. My eyes met hers and my embarrassment increased.

"Come nearer," and the Sudya pointed at a chair by his side. "What is your name?"

"Israel Abramowitch."

The Judge's long, blond-bearded face grew slightly pale, and he turned it from me just a trifle. "Yes—so you told me before."

"Who is your father?" he asked after a short silence.

"I have no father."

"Your mother?"

"I have none."

"Where is your home?"

"My home burned down."

"Where do you come from?"

I mentioned my native place.

Again he was silent for so long a time that I thought he was displeased with me. But when he spoke his voice reassured me.

"I lived in your town for some time—perhaps you do not remember me. I was Sledevatel.

I must have known all your people. Who was your father?"

"Yudel Abramowitch."

The Sudya leaned back in his chair and for a few seconds covered his eyes and high forehead, which action I thought was by way of straining his memory to recall my father; and clearing his throat he said: "Yes, I remember your father well. Er—he used to come to my house quite often and I also called at his a number of times."

Pride filled my heart. This illustrious personage in my father's house!

The Judge again passed his hand over his eyes and forehead, and throwing one leg over the other and nibbling at his long, pink finger-nails he added: "That's right. Your father died eight or nine years ago. What has become of your mother?"

Again tears rushed to my eyes. "My mother died," I responded lugubriously; but just then my eyes fell upon the girl, who was still regarding me with absorbed interest, and with a throbbing heart I added: "Yes, she died in misery and poverty, and as I had no relatives or friends to take care of me I was sent to a charity school and procured my meals every day in a different family."

He asked some more questions about the fire and my escape. Then he resumed absent-mindedly: "Where do you expect to go from here?"

"Why, I'll go to a Jewish community and resume

my 'day-eating' and study the Talmud"; and I added gloomily: "I have no other place to go to."

The little girl came up to her father and slipped her arms around his neck; her blond curls fell softly about his shoulders. I thought I detected tears in her eyes.

After my last answer the Judge seemed to be lost in thought. I stood with bowed head waiting for him to speak again.

"How would you like to stay in this house, Israel?" he asked after a while. "You will have the same teacher who gives instructions to my Katia. Isn't Feodor Maximowitch a good teacher, *golubtchick*?" His daughter answered by tightening her arms. "You will be clothed and taken care of as my own child until you grow old enough to choose for yourself."

Could I remain in the house of a *goi*, even though he offered me all these things and asked nothing in return? I hesitated. Instantly the Talmud-Torah appeared before my imagination, and I recalled the tattered clothes which I had hitherto worn, the humiliating system of "day-eating," the grim poverty of the people about me. In contrast, there was the kind gentleman who now spoke to me as if I were his equal, the beautiful house and the richly furnished rooms, fine clothes and the best of food, a teacher to instruct me in Russian literature and perhaps even French—which I then imagined to be the language of angels. Rais-

ing my eyes, I found Katia's gaze fixed at me as if she were asking me to accept her father's offer. Could I do anything but stay?

CHAPTER VIII

I AM HAPPY

WHEN I fully recovered, autumn, Russian autumn, had fairly set in. Zamok, as my benefactor's estate was called, stood isolated from the rest of the world by vast stretches of snow-covered plains, like a single ship on the ocean. The nearest village was three-quarters of a mile away, and the nearest town, which had no more than four hundred inhabitants, was a distance of about twenty miles. Had it not been for the peasants and Jews who came to attend trials or settle their disputes before the Sudya (for his residence was also his court-house), Zamok would have been as secluded and unfrequented as an undiscovered island. Mr. Bialnick seemed to be averse to society, and appeared to enjoy nothing except his child's company. My teacher accounted for the Judge's excessive melancholy by his grief for his wife, who had died about a year and a half before. However, I did not feel lonesome. For besides Katia—with whom I would not have felt lonesome had we been the only beings on a deserted island—there was Feodor Maximowitch Kremlin, our teacher; Olga Ossipovna Shtchedrin, Katia's

governess; Vinitzki, the court clerk; and a number of good jolly servants.

Katia had come to be like a loving younger sister to me. The kindness, the simplicity, the sympathy of this mere child of thirteen awoke all that was best in me—my emotions, imagination, energy, ambition. Whether in the house or out, throwing snowballs or skating, I had to be at her side. The first few months she would sometimes, though innocently, make fun of my pronunciation, which lacked the sonorous Russian ring. She would slap and scold me and mock my talk, and all this gave me delight. Both of us seemed to feel instinctively that her father would not have us too intimate; and so in her father's presence she gave no signs of the friendship which existed between us, and I likewise assumed a distant manner.

Continued happiness is stagnation: a life of suffering is adventurous and interesting. The winter glided by quietly, with no special event to break its monotony. Mr. Kremlin was a good teacher, and I, though frequently hampered by my natural tendency to do my lessons superficially, made rapid progress in the Russian language. Though I learned little of the technical rules of grammar, I acquired an extensive vocabulary, which enabled me to turn my awakening sentiments into verse; all of which, of course, were dedicated to Katia.

That spring my feelings budded and blossomed. I did not stop to analyse my new sensations. I

was merely aware that my imagination, my thoughts, my every-day existence was brighter, and that my blood ran warmer and faster. All nature seemed to share in my gladness; the birds seemed to have more cheerful notes, and the fields, the meadows, the forest, the very blades of grass never before wore such a green as they put on that spring. Scarcely a year from "day-eating" and the wretched Talmud-Torah, and everything connected with the past seemed to be effaced from my memory.

Occasionally I would think of Ephraim. Where was he? What was he doing? What would he think of my living in a gentile family and casting our Holy Law aside? And what would he say to my being fond of a girl, and a gentile girl at that?

Sometimes I would tremble at the thought that I was gradually drifting away from Judaism. What would my mother have said to this? At the thought of her I would shudder for shame; and often I decided to steal away at night and never come back. But Katia! Katia, with those long, blond curls, which she began to wear in a braid this spring—with those smiling, sparkling eyes—with those tender, teasing ways—Katia! How could I go and leave her behind me? I knew that she was a Shikselke (a little gentile girl) and I a poor wandering Jewish orphan, but I was so happy when she teased me or ordered me about that I forgot my race and my faith. Besides, I was enjoying my studies immensely, and new-born thoughts began

to sprout in my brain. I began to have aspirations; my ambition stirred me to more activity; I began to compare conditions and situations; I appreciated the beauty of Japhet and loathed the tents of Shem.

The Sudya treated me as kindly and generously as ever. It is true, I observed him frown when he found Katia leaning on my arm as we read one of Krilloff's fables; but otherwise he showed me almost paternal affection. There was a benign expression on his face, and his soft gray eyes seemed to have smiles concealed in them, despite the depressing gloom that always hovered over him. He smiled very often—he very rarely laughed; but what sadness in his smile!

That spring I also noticed that the delicate skin of his fair cheeks was becoming marred here and there by fine lines, and that his nose was turning purple. And one time, as I was about to pass through the dining-room, I found him standing by the sideboard with a decanter of rum in his hand. I started to turn back, but he noticed me, and replacing the decanter he stammered confusedly: "You may stay here, Israel." On another occasion I found him reclining unconscious in his large arm-chair and the same decanter of rum on a little round table at his elbow. At first, fright seized me. I thought he was dead. But I soon discovered differently. He was drunk. I locked the door and, moving on tiptoe, adjusted him

comfortably without arousing him. I shivered lest Katia, who had gone with her governess to visit a neighbouring hamlet, should find her father in this state. Leaving the door locked on the inside, I crept out through a window.

After this incident I noticed that he rode horse-back, which was one of his favourite sports, less frequently than usual, and he would sleep more often in the daytime. I watched him, not from curiosity, but in order to hide his drunkenness from his child; and to do this I had recourse to all sorts of devices. Innocence is easily deceived. Katia little suspected the truth about her father.

During the summer Katia took a vacation from her books, but I studied even more assiduously than before. My ambition was rising every day. Katia had once told me, when we were chatting all alone in the garden in the rear of the house, that she would marry no one but a great man—as great as Nekrasoff or Pushkin or Lermontoff. I remember distinctly that I felt dizzy for a while after she had said this, and that, in spite of my repeated efforts to speak, my words remained stuck in my throat. However, when a little later she told me I was to be a great poet like Lermontoff, I felt my blood rushing to my face and a peculiar thrill shot through all my frame. I sat opposite her and gazed and gazed into her translucent eyes, frank in their childish innocence. Then I was seized with the consciousness of my own insignifi-

cance, and I felt so hopelessly untalented that I abruptly ran away to my room and locked the door. How could I become a poet like Nekrasoff or Pushkin or Lermontoff? And how could I ever marry Katia without being like one of them? And that night, when Katia was long in bed and everybody else at Zamok slept peacefully, when even the frogs had long ceased their disagreeable croaking and the stillness was so intense that I heard my lamp burning, I sat over my books until the early blushes of morning turned the window-panes ash-colour.

CHAPTER IX

THE END OF HAPPINESS

I DID not swerve from my purpose to become a great man, and pored over my books arduously. My instructor was highly pleased with my progress. I could see his face beaming with genuine delight as I recited my lessons. "Excellent," "splendid," "very good," he would remark, pacing up and down the room as I was reading a composition or reciting a page of Cicero. Only half a year before Katia had been far ahead of me in composition, but now I was reading the masterpieces of Russian literature, while she still used a *Khrestomatia*—a book of selections. Mr. Kremlin told me that if I would study assiduously till the following summer I could easily take the examinations of the fourth and perhaps of the fifth—he referred to gymnasium grades. Of course I wished to go to the gymnasium and there study harder and harder, that I might become a great man like Nekrasoff or Pushkin or Lermontoff and—marry Katia.

And Katia would listen to Mr. Kremlin's praises of me without the least jealousy. When the teacher was gone she would put her hand on my shoulder in her childish way and, looking into my

eyes, would say: "Israel, you will go to the gymnasium the coming year and take away all the prizes. I am sure you will get a gold medal on graduation. My Cousin Mishka got one, and he is not half as bright as you. Oh, what a great man you will be some day! Your picture will be in the *Novosti* and in the *Sviet* and in the *Novi Vremia*, and you will be so proud, with your head erect—you will not want to talk to me." Here I shut her mouth with the palm of my hand. "You mean *you* will be proud," I would retort enviously, with no little rancour in my heart, "and go away to your relatives in Moscow or Kieff and mix with colonels and generals, and you will be ashamed to talk to me." I really meant every word I said, because Judge Bialnick talked of being promoted or installed either in Kieff or Moscow, where most of his near relatives lived.

And so life passed till fall had come again. Again the sky was constantly overcast with heavy dark clouds that dripped cold drops; again drizzly showers dismally washed the window-panes; again heaps of withered leaves lay around trunks of trees; again flower-stalks stood like gravestones where once was glory; again the sighing winds howled and moaned drearily.

One gloomy afternoon, while the Sudya was in the court-room administering justice to peasants, Katia and I sat in her father's study reading together and engaging in such chat as made me at the same

time jealous and happy. We were on a couch near a window. Katia sat with one foot under her and the other hanging down, her lesson-book in her lap. We ceased talking for a minute or two, while we gazed at the rain, which was becoming mixed with melting snow.

"Papa said he is sure to be promoted and will get an appointment in Kieff. You will go with us, won't you, Israel?" She said this abstractedly as she looked through the window at the snow, which was becoming more and more noticeable in the falling rain.

I swallowed a lump; my emotions almost throttled me. How innocently she asked me this! She could see no difference in our stations: to her we were equals. I began to realise now more than ever that I was a vagabond, a mere beggar. Will I go with them? My tears rushed to my eyes. Will I go with them?—as if I belonged to their circle, a member of her family.

It was all I could do to refrain from putting these incoherent thoughts into words. She looked greatly surprised at my silence. My emotions suddenly found expression in tears—I ever cried as readily as a girl. I turned and covered my face with both hands.

"Israel," she implored, attempting to remove my hands, "why do you cry? What did I say that hurt you?" And she clung to my hands, removing finger by finger.

"Listen, Katia," I blurted out passionately. "I shall study day and night until I become a great man—as great a man as you like; and then—then—ah, then——" I became conscious of what I was about to say and dropped my head in despair.

"Oh, you foolish Israel," she said, raising my head by the chin, "then I'll marry you."

How candidly and naïvely she uttered these words! Without the faintest blush, without the least excitement, with the simplest understanding of what she said.

Impulsively, without being fully conscious of what I was doing, I threw my arm around her neck and kissed her on the mouth again and again.

"Katia! Katia!"

It was Judge Bialnick's voice that called me to my senses; it sounded stern and harsh—almost cruel.

I raised my eyes frightfully and beheld Katia's father standing in the doorway, with a relentless expression on his countenance.

"Katia!" he called again; and he stood cold and erect until Katia, with downcast eyes, walked past him into the adjoining room. Then he also turned around and walked out, leaving me alone with my head drooped over my chest, and tears—large, boiling tears—burning my cheeks as they rolled down and dropped upon my shirt and vest.

CHAPTER X

I BID FAREWELL TO ZAMOK

I IMMEDIATELY repaired to my room and locked myself in. My present happiness was gone, and the magnificent castles I had built in the air were all shattered. The dreary weather outside added gloom to my misery. The rain was now completely changed to large flakes of snow that disappeared as they fell upon the muddy ground. The Sudya's stern countenance stood before my mind's eye; his harsh voice was still ringing in my ears. I brooded and reflected, though nothing definite shaped itself in my mind. I thought of Katia, of how the Sudya glanced at her as she walked across the room and past him with downcast eyes, and I shivered. I had made her suffer on my account. This thought lacerated my heart and I writhed with shame.

I sat brooding till it grew dark, but could not shape any definite plan. A knock interrupted my sad deliberation. I opened the door, and Katia's governess entered with a little parcel in her hand and placed it on the table before me.

"The Sudya sends this to you," she said briefly;

and bidding me a cold "good evening" left the room.

I regarded the parcel for several minutes before I could summon the courage to open it; I knew absolutely what message it brought to me. I opened it with trembling hands, and found a roll of ten-rouble bills and the following note in the Sudya's pointed handwriting:

"My Dear Israel Abramowitch: I hope the amount I herewith send you will enable you to make a start in life. Should you wish to continue with your studies at some school, keep me informed as to where you are, and I shall amply assist you.

"With sincere kindness,

"I remain ever helpful to you,

"ALEXIS M. BIALNICK."

I glanced contemptuously at the ten-rouble bills, and then for the time forgot them. Up to this minute I had been able to reach no decision. The Sudya's note left but one course open to me—I must leave and leave at once. My frame shook as I thought of going away. Never again see Katia's face! Never again hear her voice! Never again feel her arm on my shoulder!

I stayed up late that night, pondering and pondering upon my recklessness and folly. When at length I decided to lie down, all of the household had long been asleep. I opened the door of my room and glanced at that of Katia's. A glimmering

light, which always burned at night in her chamber, peeped in a thin line from under the door. My heart beat like a thousand hammers as my thoughts travelled back to the scene in the afternoon. I thought of her father, and a fierce desire for revenge arose in my heart. For a moment I had forgotten the gratitude I owed him for his kindness and wished only I could do him harm. But another moment brought me to my normal senses. I shuddered at the atrocity of my momentary thought, and I hated myself for my ingratitude. I quickly undressed and threw myself upon the bed.

But late as it was, sleep would not come. My sordid childhood haunted my brain—the Talmud-Torah, the cruel teachers, the miserable boys, and then a picture of my mother on her death-bed. My thoughts took a different turn. What would my mother say to my staying with gentiles and abandoning the commandments of my faith? What does the Talmud say? Ah, the Talmud! I had so distinguished myself in the study of Hebrew and the Talmud, and now I had flung them aside! My teachers had predicted a great future for me—the mantle of the rabbis—and now I had strayed off toward a different goal! The vague remembrance of my runaway brother came back to me. Where could he be? Would I ever find him? I tried to recall his features, but I could not see them distinctly. The flimsy threads that held my mind to the past strengthened; one thought sug-

gested another; each strand was intertwined with another. Was it not this same Alexis Bialnick who had been Sledevatel in our town, and in whose house my brother had taken refuge for a while? I pressed my forehead, hoping to wring out all that my brain contained regarding my brother. Yes. What was the rumour that circulated through the town when my father was arrested? Ah, now I recalled it clearly: my brother was in love with Mr. Bialnick's niece and was going to marry her at the time my father was imprisoned. And I?—I? I pressed my temples harder, harder; I wished to grasp the situation more fully. I? Why, I was following in my brother's footsteps. I also was forgetting my mother's wishes and the laws of my people.

Thus I tormented my brain for an hour or more, trembling feverishly all the while, till my present situation recurred to my mind. Since I must leave the house, why not do so surreptitiously, and thus save myself much pain and degradation?

I sat up in bed and listened. Next to my room was that of the governess; steady snores came from it. A thought began to shape itself in my brain; my pulse quickened; my heart throbbed violently. Another sound reached me—the flat, barefoot steps of a servant-girl in a distant room. Except for these two sounds, the house was in dead silence.

After I had waited a while I dressed quickly without making the least noise. I opened the door

of my room quietly; the reflection of the faint light from the room into which mine opened fell upon the roll of money on my table. I turned around and looked at it a moment thoughtlessly. I went to the table, took the bills in my hand, remained standing a few seconds abstractedly, and then, as if automatically, flung the money back upon the table. I was leaving the room, when I chanced to thrust my hand into my pocket. I did not have a single copper—not even a copeck. I went back to the table, took a few bills from the roll, and pocketed them.

I cast a last glance at my room and came out into the next one. I remained standing in hesitation. The glimmering light from under Katia's door—it made me quiver in every nerve; my blood rushed fiercely through my veins. A thought flashed into my feverish brain. I held my breath and listened again; loud snoring came from the governess's room. How my heart throbbed and beat and hammered! I turned the knob of Katia's door, and the next instant I was inside her room.

There before me lay sweet Katia, with her face ceilingward, faintly illumined by the light of the small lamp; her beautiful lips were slightly parted, and one bare hand and arm lay on the coverlet. She slept quietly and peacefully. Her head slightly turned and her crimsoned lips moved, as if she smacked them. I gazed at her eagerly, rapturously. A sound in the governess's room, which was con-

nected with Katia's and the door of which stood ajar, made my flesh creep. Soon stillness was again restored; only the heavy breathing of the governess and the swishing of the snow and sleet against the walls and window-panes were heard. "I must go—I must go," I said to myself. But Katia's white face, her mass of dishevelled hair over the pillow, almost persuaded me to change my plan and wait till morning, when I should be able to hear Katia say "good-by." But I could not wait. I had to go.

I knelt before her bed and gazed breathlessly at the sweet face before me. I was almost dazed. I leaned my head against the cold edge of her bed, dumb in silent worship. She began to stir, and the hand that rested upon the coverlet slipped down, as if she offered it me to kiss. I pressed my lips upon her fingers with all my boyish passion. Once more I gazed at her faintly illumined face, and then on tiptoe I stole out of the room.

CHAPTER XI

THE MYSTERY REVEALED

OUTSIDE it was dark, cold, dreary, with a bitter wind-driven sleet. A dog growled in his kennel as I passed him, but after springing out he seemed to recognise me and quietly disappeared within his shelter. I found the gate fastened, so I had to climb over the high barbed-wire fence which enclosed the yard, to the great injury of my clothes. On reaching the road I was undecided which direction to take. Darkness was all about me; a fearful sadness possessed me; and as I advanced a few steps an enigmatic power was pulling me back. But I struck out on the slushy road east at my fastest walk. Gusts of sleet lashed my face, and my feet sank to the ankles at every step. I tramped on and on—whither? My head was crammed with fragmentary thoughts—of my erstwhile happiness, of my folly, of my ingratitude—and my heart sank with shame of myself. Instantly, however, reason came to my defense: I had committed no sin; I had done harm to no one; I loved Katia as a sister, and why should I not kiss her? What harm is there in a kiss, that because of one the Sudya should notify me to leave? I thought of the money I had

taken; it seemed to burn in my pocket. I pulled out the notes and flung them fiercely into the mud, and plodded on my way with a quieter mind.

I tramped on through a seemingly endless stretch of mud-and-slush-covered land till at length I reached a small village, one of those entirely occupied by muzhiks (peasants), with barnlike houses and houselike barns. I would have sought shelter in one of the hedged-in huts, but all the dogs of this little community set up such a loud barking that I was glad to get out of the village with my life. After another half-hour of the heavy road I caught the faint lights of another village. By this time I was almost ready to drop from sheer exhaustion. I was numb to my very bones from the damp cold, my legs were so fagged that one would hardly follow the other, and my face stung as if it had been lashed with a bunch of nettles. But I struggled desperately, blindly on till I reached the village, which was one long and extremely narrow alley. I stopped before the first hut, which stood behind a broad rustic gate, and from which a glimmering light shone forth, determined to beg a dry spot for the rest of the night. As I came up to the gate several dogs within began such a ferocious barking that I paused, fearing to risk what little life remained in me. Recalling a kind of exorcism I knew when a child, I tried it on these raging animals. But they seemed not to mind my incantations. One jumped over the gate, and the rest made as if to

follow. In this critical situation I thought the best exorcism would be to cry for help. I did so, and a peasant, half-naked, opened the door of the hut.

"Who's that?" he asked, as he quieted the dogs.

I told him that I was a wanderer and wished to have lodging overnight.

"*Bosje Moi* [my God]," he said, crossing himself. "On a night like this!" And after he had scrutinised me he murmured to himself: "He's no thief—only a little Jew."

"I deny shelter to no one, be he Christian or Jew," he said, as he opened the gate for me.

I entered his hut. It was of the same style as those of most muzhiks: one square, earth-floored room, the unplastered walls and low ceiling of which were black with smoke. One-fourth of it occupied by a large brick oven; another fourth taken up by a large bed which was commonly known as the "family bed"; and the remaining space filled by a long, unpainted table with a rough bench along each side of it, a pail of water, a manger for the pigs, and a wooden dish for the rabbits that were crowded together in a corner. An oil-lamp burned before a small image of Christ, placed beside the window, or rather the small square hole which served as one.

A suffocating stench pervaded the room; however, the warmth brought new life into my benumbed body. Four or five of the occupants of the bed

raised their heads, and I noticed by the light of the oil-lamp that they were of both sexes.

The good muzhik set black bread, salt, and water before me, and asked me whether or not I was hungry. I thanked him gratefully, and said all I cared for was a place to sleep.

"There, Sjidotchick [little Jew], is a warm spot," he said, pointing with his finger at the top of the oven. And he unceremoniously raised the large blanket and crept under by the side of his family.

I climbed upon the high oven and was going to lie down, when I noticed something stirring there. And I was still more startled to find a partner—a girl. I was going to slip back to the floor, but she said, "There is plenty of room here," and innocently moved aside. The morality which had been inculcated in me did not permit me to accept her courtesy, and I offered as an excuse that it was too warm. So I lay down on one of the benches.

The family soon fell asleep again, but, exhausted though I was, sleep would not come to my eyes. My mind followed a train of feverish thoughts aroused by the events of the afternoon and night; and besides, even had my mind not been active, I would have been kept awake by the deep groans that arose near me, which, however, did not seem to disturb the other occupants of the hut. After my eyes had become accustomed to the semidarkness I discovered a man lying upon a truss of straw on the ground but a few feet away from me. The

dim light before the image of Christ cast a yellowish glow upon his emaciated countenance. He lay covered with a tattered sheepskin coat; his head rested upon a dirty straw cushion. His eyes were closed, his mouth half open, and he was breathing slowly, a groan coming forth with every breath.

"Basil!" he cried out, after I had been in the hut for perhaps a quarter of an hour.

Nobody answered; loud snoring rang through the stenchy room. I could now hear the man on the ground breathing heavily and tossing about restlessly. Several minutes passed.

"Basil!" he cried again in a hoarse, feeble voice.

The only answer was a chorus of snores from the "family bed."

"Basil—I—am—dying."

"To the devil!" my host muttered, as he jumped out of bed. "What do you want, Michael?"

"Brother"—Michael made a hard effort to speak—"brother, bring the priest. I am dying."

Basil scratched his head as if undecided what to do. He looked good-natured, but he appeared to entertain some doubts as to whether his brother had reached the point when a priest is necessary. He uttered a curse good-naturedly, as if his brother's request was merely an every-day jest, and said: "Oh, Michael, you won't die yet, and I'll trouble the Batiushka [little father] for nothing."

Michael emitted a deep groan. "God knows

whether—I'll live long enough—to see the sun. Call the Batiushka."

I shuddered. Basil scratched his head again, muttered a few curses under his breath, and put on his heavy fur coat and his sheepskin hat. "I know you will trouble the Batiushka for nothing," he said, and slammed the door behind him.

The rest of the family paid no heed to the dying man. "My confession—my confession," he murmured feebly, as he tossed about convulsively in the agonies of death. Once he rose by a sudden impulse to a sitting posture and screamed: "Oh, the priest! Confession—my confession!" Nobody seemed to have heard him; the family was peacefully snoring; a few pigs under the family bed grunted and squealed restlessly.

It must have been a little before daybreak when I heard approaching footsteps. Soon the door opened, and Basil entered with a corpulent old man, whose long, white hair overhung his broad shoulders.

"Here, Batiushka," Basil said reverentially, pointing a finger at his brother, writhing with pain on the ground.

The Batiushka remained standing in the middle of the room, leaning on his heavy gold-headed walking-stick. The host produced a long, thin lath, which he stuck between two uncemented bricks of the oven and then lighted. The flaring torch cast a mournful light over the whole room, and brought

out the cadaverous face of the dying man with ghastly distinctness.

"Michael," Basil said to his brother, "here is the Batiushka."

The dying peasant made an effort to raise his head, but fell back upon the truss of straw. There was a convulsive twitching of his emaciated countenance, his unshaven chin trembled, his eyelids fluttered, and his whole frame shivered.

The priest crossed himself and with eyes uplifted murmured: "May the Father, Son, and Holy Virgin bring you salvation."

"Batiushka," the patient began in a low, guttural voice, his eyes moving wildly—"Batiushka, I wish to confess before I die. I sinned heavily—heavily—heavily." Here he collapsed.

"Confess and bring salvation to your soul."

This word of encouragement from the priest seemed to give strength to the dying man, and though shivering violently he proceeded more easily: "Oh, Batiushka, my great sins have preyed upon my life for the last ten years—ever since I was seized in the devil's clutches!"

"Confess and lighten your burdened heart," the priest encouraged him again, making the sign of the cross.

The dying man seemed to be so agitated with his forthcoming confession that for some time he could not speak. Then he resumed, a gasp after each choppy sentence:

"Batiushka, I wish my soul to go up to God. I want to tell you all before I die." Another long pause. "About fifteen years ago I worked for a Jew. His name was Yudel Abramowitch."

I sat up and gasped for breath at the mention of my father's name.

"He treated me well, he did. But the devil got me in his clutches, and I took to drink. My master gave me many warnings, but the devil would not let me stop. Yudel told me to leave—I couldn't blame him. I hung around the taverns, helped them a little, got plenty of drink." He paused again. "I drank more and more. I was kicked out from every place. Then I got to be helper to the sexton in the synagogue.

One day a burglary occurred next to the sexton's house. I was arrested. I was innocent, Batiushka. They brought me before Sledevatel Bialnick. He cross-examined me. He could not get anything out of me. I was innocent and knew nothing of the burglary. We were alone in his office—Bialnick and I. 'Michael,' says he to me, 'I'll have to indict you. Your record of the past shows that you committed this crime.' And then says he: 'But I'll help you and set you free if you'll do a trifle for me!' 'Yes,' says I. 'Do you know Marianka, the washerwoman?' says he. I knew her well; she was a pretty girl; people talked about her being Bialnick's mistress. 'I want you to go to her house quite often,' says

he, 'and tell the people she is your mistress.' 'Yes,' says I, and I was set free the same day."

He rested again and then went on: "A few months later Marianka gave birth to a child. The Sledevatel gave me money for Marianka; when I gave it to her she took it and cried. Then one day Bialnick called me to his office and asked me to own the bastard as mine. I did not object. What difference was it to me? So everybody said the child was mine, and I laughed. Several years passed. I had plenty to drink and plenty of money. The Sledevatel was never stingy. The brat grew like a sapling—the very image of Bialnick."

For several minutes he struggled hard for his breath. The priest was like a statue. My heart was throbbing and my head was whirling.

"A few weeks before Easter Bialnick sent for me. He asked me how I liked being called the father of another man's child. 'Would it not be best to get rid of this bastard,' says he—'better for me, better for you?' I said it would. 'Why should one not make an end of it?' says he. I told him that would be a risky business. 'We could transfer it to the Jewish account,' says he. I did not understand. He said that Passover was near, and didn't I know that Jews kill Christian children for the Passover. 'Some Jew would be blamed for it,' says he. 'Why not Yudel Abramowitch?' I said he was a good man; he had been very good to me. 'Michael,' says he, 'you are a fool. Don't you

know the Jews killed our Saviour and nailed Him to the cross, and they are still sucking our blood? Yudel Abramowitch is a bloodsucker,' says he. 'He's skinning the peasants alive, and he got all his money by his Jew tricks and has a mortgage on all my property.' All the time he had poured out glass after glass of whisky—and oh, Batiushka, I promised!"

Michael fell back on the straw and tossed convulsively.

"Go on—go on," the Batiushka encouraged him. "God will forgive you. You have only been the instrument in the hands of a wicked man."

"Yes, yes, Batiushka, only an instrument, blessed Batiushka," wept the dying peasant. "Our Saviour knows that I did it in His name, as Bialnick told me——"

"Not in His name," struck in the pious priest. "It was in Satan's name." And he made the sign of the cross over his breast.

"Yes, Batiushka, in the devil's name. And while I was in the devil's clutches I coaxed the child out into the woods. I cut its throat and hid the body in the synagogue."

He ended and lay fighting for his last breath. "Oh, Batiushka!" he gasped, clutching the priest's hand. But not another word. Incoherent babbling was all I could hear. The priest took a cross from his pocket and pressed it to the dying lips.

I arose unsteadily to my feet. The members of

the family were rising one by one; the rabbits, crowded together in a corner, were munching withered cabbage leaves; the pigs under the "family bed" squealed and grunted; the chickens cackled in the coop under the oven—it was daybreak already.

Without so much as a "thank you" I slipped out of the hut, leaving the peasant in his last gasps and the priest whispering words of absolution in his ears.

Vaguely I marvelled that chance had brought me to this hut on just this night; vaguely I thought of life being a chain linked of chances; vaguely I recalled the incidents of my life and the chances that linked them together. Little by little new thoughts, new sentiments took possession of me—strange thoughts, wild sentiments. This Bialnick—this supposed benefactor. A fierce, savage desire for vengeance—vengeance at any cost—burned within me. And suddenly, like a streak of lightning ripping the clouds, the remembrance of a face recurred to my mind. Ah, Katia! Katia! Honey from a stinging bee.

CHAPTER XII

BACK TO MY OWN

My first impulse as I left the hut was to go back to the Sudya and tell him all I had discovered—tell him that I knew he was the cause of my father's death, and that the innocent blood of my poor mother was on him; tell him that I was not yet strong enough to kill him, but some day, when I was stronger, I should find vengeance for my parents' blood. But after I had gone a few paces back over the road that led to Zamok I realised how useless such a step would be. With these thoughts still torturing my brain I returned, and as if fearing my own will I began to run.

The weather had slightly changed during the night; the hail and snow had ceased falling, and the warm caress of the rising sun turned the furrowed fields into splashy mud and slush. At every step I could scarcely free my foot from the limy mud, and my boots squashed like croaking frogs.

I struggled along the mail road, melancholy, my head bent over my chest. Gradually my fierce sentiment against Bialnick gave place to a different feeling, and my heart began to throb violently. At first this feeling was vague, almost incompre-

hensible, but I was soon conscious of a sweet and alluring air chiming in my ears; a soothing sensation passed through my frame; a charming picture presented itself before me—Katia! I felt the thrill of hope as this vision flitted through my mind. Again my heart was burning with a craving desire; again my blood was flowing warmer and swifter; again an almost irresistible impulse was forcing me back to Zamok—go back and read of the same book with her; feel the touch of her locks against my burning cheeks; hear her say again, “Why, you foolish Israel, then I’ll marry you”—and forget—forget my father and her father and everything that embittered my heart!

But I realised that to return was impossible; so I tramped painfully, doggedly on, my legs growing heavier and heavier. Presently the faint jingling of a bell behind me broke in upon my hopeless thoughts. Turning about, I beheld a long, mud-covered Kibitka, the top of which was a quaint combination of patches, drawn by two skinny, bespattered horses. I stopped and awaited its approach. But just before it reached me its front wheels sank half-way to the hubs in a water-hidden rut.

“Phmtz—phmtz!” the driver encouraged his animals. They pulled with all their strength, but the wheels, evidently not well greased, creaked without rolling. “Would that the black cholera had you, you limping old mares!” This the driver

followed by a long string of oaths, jerking the reins and whipping the poor beasts mercilessly. Several passengers jumped out of their own accord, and this so lightened the vehicle that the horses, by a sudden pull, drew the Kibitka, creaking, out of the rut.

"Nu, Pritzim [noblemen]," the driver accosted his passengers half-sarcastically, "get a move on you. You think my lions [tapping his horses with his whip] can carry you a thousand miles without a stop, hey?"

"We dragged slowly enough all night," complained one of the passengers from within the Kibitka, "and if we keep on moving at this rate we'll scarcely get to Javolin at sunset."

"If you please," the driver rejoined with unsuppressed wrath, "I'll not drive my poor horses to death on your account—no, not for seventy-five copecks. At this time of the year I should have charged at least a ruble and a half, but—all plagues on the other coachmen!—competition is fierce. Well [a little facetiously], you will become a rabbi a day later."

Javolin! Who had not heard of the Yeshiva (seminary) of Javolin? What God-fearing mother did not cherish the hope of having at least one son at this Talmudic lyceum? What wealthy father did not speculate of procuring a son-in-law from this center of learning? What Shadchan (marriage broker) did not cast his bait in this pond of gold-

fish? The Yeshiva of Javolin—the source of prodigies!

Javolin now appeared to me like a twinkling star in a dense night. My way was pointed me.

I went up to the driver and asked him to take me to Javolin.

“For how much?” he asked pointedly, beating the butt of his whip against his long, muddy boots.

I stood abashed, with my fingers fumbling in my pockets as if I were scraping my money together.

“We will not allow you to take another passenger,” remonstrated the one who had before shown great anxiety to get to Javolin. “We hired you for three of us, and already you have crowded in seven more.”

“How do you figure seven?” returned the driver. “I agreed with you not to have more than three men. Do you call this lady with children a man?” He pointed his finger at a small family crouched together in the Kibitka. “Do you call that poor gentleman,” he said in a lowered voice, pointing at another passenger, “a man? Well, I am an ignoramus, but you ought to know that the Talmud says: ‘A poor man is regarded as a corpse.’ Did I ever promise you not to carry corpses? And now as to that blind gentleman, don’t you know that the Talmud says that a blind man is exempt from all religious obligations? Now as to this youngster, he is no man, as you can see for yourself.”

These jesting excuses pacified the grumbling passenger. Turning to me, the driver said: "Well, how much will you give?"

"I—I—lost my money," I stammered, feeling the blood spring to my cheeks from shame of the lie.

"Aha! little fellow," the driver said humorously, "you lost your money, hey? If you're as smart as that you must have reached manhood, and I agreed with these gentlemen to take no more than three." He laughed heartily as he turned to his passengers and winked.

I dropped my eyes and wished I might sink through the ground; his jests hurt me, and the passengers stared at me curiously.

After a short rest the driver asked the passengers to take their seats, and he jumped upon the box. My heart sank within me as I watched them crawl into the long, narrow, closed wagon. I would give anything to be taken to Javolin, but I did not have a copeck. But as I started away on foot the driver called after me: "Where do you live, young fellow?"

Tears filled my eyes. Where did I live?

He glanced at me pityingly. "Jump up," he said, and moved aside to make room for me.

CHAPTER XIII

THE YESHIVA

WHEN we reached Javolin the other passengers had supper at the inn before which the Kibitka had dropped us, but I, having no money, set out immediately for the Yeshiva. Though night had fallen, I needed no guide to it; brightly lighted, it towered above the few hundred low-built, thatch-roofed huts that composed Javolin. From a distance it appeared like a lighthouse, and its reflection cast a vast shadow over the sea of roofs. I followed this light. The town was quiet; not a moving team, not a pedestrian, not another light to cheer the deserted alleys, not even the sound of my footsteps as I was treading the slush—nothing but dense darkness, gloom, isolation. Only once this deathlike stillness was broken as the door of a tavern opened.

But hark! While still at some distance from the Yeshiva a sound like that of water seething over a great dam reached my ears. I held my breath; I put my feet down softly; I strained my ears. As I approached nearer the seminary the sound grew louder and separated into distinct voices—the sum of hundreds of voices, each pitched in its

own key. For a minute I stood in front of the great white building and gazed through the long arched windows at the swaying heads and shadows of heads, of shoulders, of opening and closing mouths, and at the waving arms, slightly oscillating lamps suspended on long wires; and I watched the young students, with cigarettes between their lips and long books under their arms, hurry down the score of cut-stone steps and disappear in the many small side streets that branch off the Yeshiva campus.

I climbed the stairs with awe in my heart, opened the door, and tremblingly entered. A bewildering spectacle was before my eyes. No less than five hundred students were in the enormous class-room, varying from striplings of sixteen to grown men with long, untrimmed beards, sitting and standing on both sides of the long "reclining desks." They swayed their bodies backward and forward, from side to side, like so many pendulums in a clockmaker's shop, while they coned their lessons in as loud a voice as each pleased, and in as many different intonations as the voices that uttered them. Some sang Talmudic rules in elastic barytones and modulated alto voices; some recited the intricate, never-ending, hair-splitting arguments in plaintive, imploring notes, and some piped Halachas (statutes) in sweet soprano; some laughed and some groaned; some shouted and some hummed in hushed voices; some talked and some whispered; some winked

and some stared idiotically—an uproar of Talmudic learning! The sight was purely oriental, unadorned by Grecian art or modern European polish.

Among the clamorous rows of students there were representatives of all climes and of all generations of the race: old-looking, swarthy Arabian faces; delicately cut Grecian faces; faces with commanding Roman noses; sandy-complexioned Russian faces; and faces suggestive of Spain and Holland and Germany and Poland and of nations unknown. In their thoughtful countenances, their gestures, their nervous actions—in everything about these children of a wandering people—a physiognomist might have read, as from an open book, the same vivid imaginations and poetic minds that characterised, in ages long past, their heroes, poets, and brilliant sages.

In dress and physique the students varied as much as in their faces. There were men in old-fashioned long caftans, with corkscrew curls dangling on both sides of their cheeks, and others in clothes of the very latest style; not a few appeared wealthy, their faces wearing the expression of the spoiled child. Hale, robust lads with broad shoulders and piercing eyes were promiscuously discernible among flat-breasted, submissive-looking boys.

A short, heavy-set man with a small, iron-gray beard and dull face walked between the rows of desks, scrutinising everybody with his stupid eyes and noting in his little book every vacant seat. He

was the Mashgiach (inspector). He frequently stopped and spoke to those seated near, as if inquiring about the absent student. A tall man with sottish eyes, purple nose, and curly peiis (ear-locks) followed behind the Mashgiach, step by step.

A few students noticed me standing near the door, but no attention was paid me until the man with the sottish eyes—who, I was told later, was the Mashgiach's assistant—came to me and asked whom I wished to see. I told him I came to enroll in the Yeshiva. He glanced me over with a satirical smile on his face, and scratching his left peii said: "Did you bring your wet-nurse and your cradle along with you?"

This sarcasm cut me to the quick. He saw the effect of his words and hastened to make amends. "I mean no harm," he said, scratching the same peii. "Go to the Rosh-H'Shiva [principal], and he will do the right thing by you."

The Rosh-H'Shiva lived in a luxurious home next to the seminary. I ascended the high porch and was admitted to a brightly lighted corridor.

A tall, handsome young lady, richly dressed, with the dignity of a queen and the arrogance of a servant-girl who marries her master, came up to me and asked:

"Do you wish to see the Rabbi?"

"Yes," I murmured.

"You may see him in his study—there," she said a trifle haughtily, and pointed to a large

room across the hallway, the doors of which were open.

I stopped at the threshold. A solidly built man of about seventy years, with a calm, broad, square forehead, was stooped over a long table, upon which lay a number of open folios. His unspectacled eyes skipped from book to book as he turned a few leaves of one or scribbled a few words on the margin of another. Every line in his face showed complete absorption. I stood for some minutes waiting for him to take notice of me, but he continued bent over the books, unconscious of my presence. So I thought it wise to cough.

He raised his eyes. "What do you wish, my child?" he asked in a benign, husky voice.

I told him that I desired to enter his institution.

He stretched out his little fat hand. "Sholam Aleichem [peace be to you]," he said. "And where do you come from?"

I knew the consequence if I told the truth. I hesitated a moment and then gave the name of a small town I had never seen.

He was proceeding to question me further, showing a little rigour in his tone, when he was interrupted by the young lady I had met in the corridor. "Miriam, how is Teploffka?" he asked of her. "Do we get anything from there?"

"The collectors scarcely make their expenses," she replied authoritatively. "And besides, we have

no trustees there, and I do not believe that we can allow a Teploffka student any stipend."

I did not know what reply to make. I stood dumb between the aged Rabbi and the beautiful young lady (who I afterward learned was his third wife), like a Daniel between two lions.

The Rosh-H'Shiva turned again to me: "Perhaps your father will be able to send you enough money, so that you won't need any stipend," he suggested.

"I have no father," I murmured.

"A Yosem [orphan]?" he inquired in a sympathising tone.

"Neither father nor mother," I replied.

The Rabbi looked at me thoughtfully, curling a few hairs of his white beard about his forefinger. His young wife regarded me with anything but pleasure.

"Well," he said after a few moments, "present yourself before the Mashgiach to-morrow, and if he reports your examination satisfactory we'll see what we can do for you."

"I don't believe we can give anything to a resident of Teploffka," struck in his wife, noticeably irritated, as if her own money were in question. "I looked at the books the other day, and I found that Teploffka never contributed much to the Yeshiva."

"A—a—my child" (he addressed his wife also as "My child"), the Rabbi said softly, "we'll see to-morrow—a—a—we'll see to-morrow."

A few minutes later I was tramping back through the muddy street to the tavern where the Kibitka had dropped me.

CHAPTER XIV

MY NEW HOME

THE following morning I presented myself before the Mashgiach, who was also the examiner, and upon his recommendation I was accepted and granted a stipend of seventy-five copecks a week, though Rabbi Brill's beautiful young wife insisted that fifty copecks were plenty.

Before I was quite settled I sauntered diffidently about the Yeshiva. A number of students, who would sneak out as soon as the Rosh-H'Shiva appeared, were always found lounging about the lobby, with books under their arms and lighted cigarettes between their lips. For some young men came here for the sole purpose of being enrolled as students in order that they might obtain a reputation for scholarship and so have their dowries increased. They would chat, crack jokes, play pranks upon one another, criticise the Yeshiva officials, make insinuating remarks about Rabbi Brill's young wife, and were altogether bent on mischief.

Seeing me, they began to make me the butt of their jests. A tall, lean fellow, with glasses on his nose, whispered to another, loud enough to be heard

by them all: "Did this baby [meaning me] bring his mamma along?" A roar of laughter followed this facetious remark. I blushed, dropped my eyes, and bored my pocket painfully. Immediately a coiled wet towel, thrown by one of the group, struck me in the back of the neck and sent my cap flying. I should have been furious at this insult, but I had only a desire to sneak away.

"Shrolke!" exclaimed a voice as I was picking up my cap.

I wheeled about joyfully. "Ephraim!" I cried; and we were straightway clasped in each other's arms.

"A mountain never meets a mountain, but one person comes across another," he quoted in Aramaic-Chaldaic.

He freed himself and turned to a group of loiterers. "See here, you fellows, you'll find it a good plan to leave him alone." Without waiting for their reply, he led me off to his room, and there we told one another of our experiences. I confided everything to him except my feeling for Katia, a subject too sacred for me to lay bare even to my dearest friend. In spite of my deadly hatred against her father, she was sweeter than ever to me.

The same day I obtained lodgings at a poor tailor's for the modest price of twenty-five copecks a week, and I hoped to stretch the balance of my stipend so that it would cover my board and other necessities.

I do not believe my landlord ever had a given name, and if he had I am certain he was unacquainted with it. In the community he was known as Menke Shmunke's—that is, Menke the son of Shmunke. And his wife, who through some blunder of Providence was made a woman, was commonly called Groone Menke Shmunke's. Notwithstanding their humble station and names, Groone always talked disdainfully of the "ordinary working classes," and so influenced her husband as to make him believe that he was a respectable Baal-H'bos (bourgeois).

Menke was a small man who had probably ceased to grow at the age of twelve, as is sometimes the case with hard-working children. His bones were large and broad, and the more prominent as the Creator had neglected to cover them with enough flesh; his cheek-bones were high and the cheeks very hollow and overgrown with a tousled black beard, over which hung his long, sticky peiis, which frequently annoyed him when he bent forward to thread a needle. A skull-cap invariably crowned his head. The material of this cap was a puzzle to me. At first I thought it was velvet because of its gloss and blackness, but after closer observation I found the gloss to have been chiefly due to the pressure of his hat, under which he always wore his cap, in order (as he once explained to me) that he might not remain bareheaded when delivering clothes in places where the removal of

his cap would be necessary, so I changed my opinion.

Groone was Menke's second love, and by no means had he been disappointed in his second venture, for in a little over seven months he had been blessed with a Kaddish (a male child to say prayers after a dead parent). At first the continued existence of this Kaddish was gravely doubted; nevertheless, he grew tall and stooped, and had as fine a pair of crooked shoulders as ever overtowered a folio of Talmud. His name was Samuel, which was fondly diminished by his mother to Shmulke, which his father, who talked through his nose—because that organ was broken a little below the Semitic bridge—pronounced Shmunke; and as the Kaddish likewise talked through his nose, he also had difficulty in pronouncing his own name, and therefore spoke of himself as Shmunke Menke Shmunke's.

Although Menke was very anxious to have a daughter (for as Groone used to complain, she had enough bedclothes for half a dozen daughters), the "Lord had shut up her womb," and Shmunke remained a *ben-yochid* (an only son). Naturally, Shmunke "was given unto the Lord all the days of his life," and he was destined by his parents to become a rabbi. And in the manner of the prophet there never came scissors upon his head, so that at the time of my forming his acquaintance he could knot his peiis under his chin. He was now about

eighteen years old, and his mind was constantly rambling in the *cul-de-sac* of the Babylonian compilation.

There were only two rooms in the house. One served for the kitchen, for the bedroom of the husband and wife, and also for the tailor shop, in which Menke and Groone sat from sunrise till late at night over their work. The other was Shmunke's room; it was always clean and neat. I was supposed to share this room with him, but it so happened that it was practically mine alone, for Shmunke stayed in the Yeshiva, to the extreme joy of his poor parents, every day and the greater part of every night, and shook himself and shouted as loud as his lungs would allow over a large and heavy volume of Talmud.

The second day after I had come to reside with these people Groone came into my room, smoothing her heavy wig, and a little awkwardly opened conversation. "Teploffker [most of the students were called by the name of the town they came from], I hate to intrude upon people; you know, it is not my nature. As I always say to my husband (may he live a hundred and twenty years!), some people like to impose, but our natures are quite the other way. We know our station. Not like Beile Yente Mollie Zippe's, who thinks because her second cousin was a rabbi she is an aristocrat. I know full well, if not for my Shmunke, who, Rabbi Brill said with his own holy mouth, is going to be a

shining light in Israel, I would be no more than the ordinary working people. I admit that I would be no more than Yankle, Chaim, or Todres. But when God blessed us with such a son—well, you can't help feeling a little proud, as the Talmud says—he! he! you will excuse me if I misquote it; I am only a woman [and her countenance assumed a smiling grimace], but I think it says that good children pull their parents out of the blazes of hell, and of course a person can't help, you know, feeling a trifle elated over such a blessing. As I say, it is not in our nature, neither in mine nor in my husband's (may he live a hundred and twenty years!)—but really, what do you think of our Shmunke? Are there any brighter boys in the Yeshiva? Really, I am only a poor, ignorant woman; but is there anybody who knows more than Shmunke? And——” She suddenly checked herself and with a beaming face she said: “I hear him coming, and I must be quick. My! my! How hungry my poor darling must be!”

And in a jiffy the table in “our” room was covered with a white cloth and a savoury dinner was set upon it. Menke and his wife never breakfasted on anything better than black bread and chicory, and their second meal (for they ate twice a day only) consisted of the same rye bread, a piece of herring, and milk-washed barley.

When Shmunke was in the house his parents never talked above a whisper; then their thoughts

seemed to be centered upon him alone. Late at night, while Shmunke pondered in the Yeshiva over some commentary upon the Talmud, and while I sleeplessly thought of Katia, Menke and Groone would hold council regarding their ben-yochid's future. The subject was always the same, and their talk always was much as follows:

"Menke"—thus the dialogue would commence—"Menke, are you already asleep? [Menke would stir in his bed, evidently desirous of slumber.] Menke, you blockhead, you peasant's brain, you straw-stuffed head, why not Mendel the timber merchant's daughter? Why not? [No reply from Menke.] Now tell me why not, you stiff-necked father. Mendel, as the whole world knows, is a *lamden* [a man learned in the Talmud], who owns a water-mill, manages two large estates for Count Metzkewicz, is tax-collector, and has no sons. [The primogeniture law is still in existence among the Jews in Russia.] Mendel is fully seventy years old, and how long does a man live? Think what Shmunke would fall heir to. Imagine what Hirshle the cobbler, Baril the carpenter, Zemach the water-carrier would think of us then—and who would not? They would simply hang themselves with jealousy. Shmunke would get a seat in the synagogue next to the Oren-Kodesh. What! you are really snoring? A plague on you! You may burst on the spot. And I say Mendel's daughter and no one else."

A few seconds of silence would ensue. Not a sound from the other bed.

"Well, Menke, did you get deaf and dumb all of a sudden?"

"Oh, I told you a hundred times," Menke would finally answer through his nose in a sleepy tone, "that I'd rather have my son marry a rabbi's daughter than the daughter of a timber merchant. What is wealth? As it stands in the Tehilim [Psalms]: 'For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.'" From the clearness of his voice I judged that he rose on his elbow, as he continued suavely: "Look here: Torah is the best merchandise. The Rabbi is also an aged man, the girl is his only child, and when he dies who will succeed him if he should have a son like our Shmunke? *Narrele* [little fool]," he would proceed persuasively, "why should money dazzle your eyes? Now think what our enemies would say seeing our Shmunke with the Rabbi's daughter under the Chupa [nuptial canopy]."

Little by little such conversations would become more and more broken until nothing would be heard from the next room but the sonorous snoring of the pair, like trumpets out of tune.

CHAPTER XV

THE "SHA"

HOWEVER great the contrast between the life I had led in the Sudya's house and that I spent with these humble people, the next few months passed rapidly and almost happily. It is true the sacred fire which Katia had kindled in my young heart did not smoulder, and the ambition which she had aroused in me grew daily and took full possession of me; but I was conscious of the heavy shackles that checked my movements, and was discreet enough to keep still when I realised that the raising of my voice would bring me no relief.

I learned the ways and manners of my school-mates and became one of them. I learned to sway myself backward and forward and shout the Talmudic lore at the top of my voice. By and by I even learned to condemn Rabbi Brill for being henpecked, and his young wife for curtailing the students' stipends.

Ephraim was as commanding in this great institution as he had been in that dingy little Talmud-Torah. Here, too, he was the leading spirit, and was hated by Rabbi Brill and the other seminary officials as he had been feared by Shlomka Gazlen.

Although the school authorities knew that he was violating every rule of the faculty, he was never molested on that score. But he frequently got himself into trouble by taking the part of others.

A few days before the close of the winter semester the stipends of forty-five students were reduced twenty per cent., and a number of students who had been caught reading "prohibited books" were given notice to resign. Ephraim promptly took up the cause of his unfortunate fellow-students. He openly condemned the actions of the Rosh-H'Shiva and agitated fearlessly among his classmates. The Yeshiva was in a state of uprising. Students stood in groups about the campus, discussing the state of affairs in excited tones, hushing at the appearance of Rabbi Brill and resuming as soon as he was out of sight.

"To-night we'll have the biggest 'Sha' Rabbi Brill ever saw," Ephraim confided to me one morning. "Unless the stipends are raised and the raids of students' lodgings stopped at once, Rabbi Brill will stay there all night, and every window-pane of his house will be smashed."

"But why blame him?" I asked. "If the contributions to the stipend fund have diminished, what can he do?"

"What can he do?" he burst out vehemently.

You're the same chicken-hearted fellow as of old; you always believe everybody. He lives in luxury, his wife rolls in gold and lavishes money on

dressess, and forty-five poor students are to suffer! Why should he suppress the reading of enlightening books and periodicals? Aren't we our own masters?"

I urged him to abandon the plan, but he said sharply that I was just like a girl—afraid of everybody; and then he abruptly left me.

In the evening, after prayers, every student resumed his studies as usual. Rabbi Brill, as was his wont, walked between the rows of desks, and up and down the long passage between the tall, white "four columns" which supported the oriental structure. He moved slowly, his thumbs stuck restfully in his abnet, his Streimel (round fur hat) tilted back, and cast suspicious glances here and there. Presently Rabbi Brill reached his arm-chair, which looked like a kingly throne, and opened a pocket-edition volume of the Mishna (a syllabic digest of the Talmud).

Then suddenly, "Sh! Sh! Sh! Sh!" hissed five hundred breaths. And just as suddenly all were hushed.

Rabbi Brill leaped from his chair, and his energetic, powerful face clouded with rage. He turned his piercing eyes right and left, but none of the students looked at him.

"Sh! Sh! Sh! Sh!" again came from all sides like so many hissing snakes.

The Mashgiach slapped his desk wrathfully. "Silence!" he cried.

"Silence!" shouted his assistant.

But their commands did nothing to quiet the sibilant uproar.

Rabbi Brill's anger seemed to be aroused to its highest pitch, but he still restrained his feelings, and continued walking down the passage between the "four columns," trying to subdue the class with his looks. But of no avail. His patience gave way, and he cried out in his hoarse voice: "Stop hissing!"

No one regarded him. Stamping of feet began to be heard at the farthest end of the hall. Ephraim, who sat opposite me, joined in the stamping, and commenced slapping the book before him. Rabbi Brill paused in front of me, his patriarchal countenance white with wrath, and fixed his eyes upon Ephraim.

"Stop that, you rascal!" he shouted, pointing his finger at Ephraim.

"Raise the stipends!" responded Ephraim boldly, hissing and stamping his feet the more.

Rabbi Brill lifted his hand and let it fall twice on Ephraim's cheek. The reports of the slaps hushed the class for a second, but the next instant the confusion increased. A prolonged whistle rang through the seminary. At once all the lights were turned out, and a shower of smashed lamps and their chimneys came rattling to the floor; benches, chairs, tables, and everything breakable flew up in the air and came down with a crash; a large tank of

water which stood at the entrance was turned over; and above the clapping, stamping, shouting, whistling, and hissing, the cry arose again and again in chorus: "Raise the weekly stipends!" "Raise the weekly stipends!"

Rabbi Brill groped his way out of the darkness, but the Mashgiach and his assistant, who were less respected, were beaten and thrown bodily out of the hall with a great air-rending cheer.

As soon as the "Sha" was over a committee of arbitration was sent to the Rosh-H'Shiva. He, or rather his young wife, immediately granted the raise of those weekly stipends that had been reduced, but he would not retract the other decrees. The offense at which they were directed could not be tolerated in a Jewish theological school, he declared with tears in his eyes, and he said that he would rather see the doors of the Yeshiva closed forever than permit the reading of "pernicious books," as he called novels and philosophic works.

Ephraim saved others, but himself he could not save. The authorities could not overlook the part he had taken in this uprising, and immediately ordered his expulsion.

One beautiful springlike morning a few days later a light cart moved slowly through the main street of Javolin, and after it came a long train of whistling, singing, shouting students. When the hilarious procession reached the mail-coach road leading to Vilno the cart halted and all voices were

hushed; all eyes were raised to Ephraim, who mounted the cart. He waved his hat and expanded his chest, but for a moment it seemed he could not give vent to his overflowing sentiments. His eyes glowed like burning charcoal and his whole body quivered. Then he controlled himself and poured forth his ideas with all the passion and fire of his nature. He spoke of the new epoch which was beginning with the young generation, of fanaticism, of enlightenment, and of the mysterious future.

The audience listened breathlessly. When he had finished speaking they burst into a frenzy of cheering, and when the time of departure came every one embraced and kissed him.

Long after the happy gathering had returned to their crude studies, long after the cart that carried my friend had disappeared from sight, I stood brooding by the roadside, with my head drooped over my chest—just as I had stood on “Bloody Hill” years before, when Ephraim had left me that first time. I was again left friendless, and again I began to brood over the past, yearning the more after my sweet Katia, and longing after the books I had read in her house, and (with shame in my heart do I record this) a faint hatred against the Talmud and against Jewish life generally struck root in the depths of my heart.

CHAPTER XVI

THE REAWAKENING

THE following summer was the beginning of a great epoch in the history of the Yeshiva, and also in the lives of all Russian Jews. There was a reawakening—a resurrection, so to speak—of the low-sunken race. The flood of enlightenment that streamed from western lands swept even through the enclosures of the uncouth Ghettos.

That summer the broad-minded monarch, the emancipator of the peasants, also showed his willingness to liberate the Jews. His first step was to admit them to schools from which they had been barred. Hitherto the young people had been restrained within by the demoniac clutches of fanaticism and without by the tyrannical hand of the Government. The announcement of the relaxation of the latter flashed through the dingy Jewries like a new light. The young generation was dazzled with the brilliancy of the opportunities for enlightenment that had dawned upon them. There was confusion in the synagogues and uprising in the Yeshivas. Children ran away from their fanatical parents, and young Talmudists from their wives.

Haskolo! Haskolo! (culture) became the cry of the young.

Naturally the Mashgiach and his "scouts" were now more active than ever and kept closer watch over the students on the "suspected list"—a list that included the very brightest students of the institution. It became a daily occurrence to search students' rooms, break open their trunks, burn their "forbidden books," and expel them from town that they might not corrupt others. But these acts of tyranny could not destroy the craving for the new thought. Prohibited literature continued to be read behind bolted doors and in sequestered spots of the woods which surrounded Javolin, and in spite of the Mashgiach's careful scrutiny of the mail, "forbidden" books and journals continued to be smuggled in. It was even discovered that some of the contributors to the black-listed magazines were seminary students, who concealed their identity under fictitious names.

But in none of these acts of insubordination did I take part, nor did the least suspicion fall upon me. I never touched a literary book or a periodical, nor did I even breathe to any one that I could read Russian. The faculty wished me to study the Talmud and the Talmud only, and I obeyed their rules religiously. I had had enough trouble and now craved peace. I followed in the footsteps of my room-mate Shmunke, and little by little my mind became as dull and inactive as his. My only

thought apart from the Talmud, and that only a fleeting one, was a fragmentary recollection of Katia and her father. Fanaticism had grown stronger and stronger in me until it had induced me to believe that to think of anything but the Talmud—even of Katia—was an unpardonable sin, and I scrupulously avoided all sins.

But changes happen unexpectedly. It was late—near the first blush of morning. I sat in the Yeshiva, swaying my body over the Talmud and trying to unravel some knotty point. For there are many knotty points in that crude and marvellous Babylonian encyclopedia, to which hundreds of commentators have copiously added knots in their earnest endeavour to simplify difficulties. There are Tesopheth, Marshoa, Mahram, the Rosh, and numerous other hair-splitting expounders, each one of whom is trying to straighten the other, only to become the more entangled himself. There is no end of questions and no end of answers, but the radical question was never asked and never answered. But let me not fall into the Talmudic style, but proceed with my story.

Only one other student still lingered in the great class-room—Nehemiah Rosencranz, a dark, slight young man of about twenty-one or two, with a pair of nervous, thoughtful eyes and tightly pressed lips. The younger boys looked up to him with a feeling which almost amounted to reverence. The Mashgiach and his scouts would hardly have dared

to search his room, even if they had suspected him of wrong-doing. Rabbi Brill often found himself greatly perplexed when Nehemiah would begin to question during a Talmudic lecture. Besides honour, he received a large stipend, which enabled him to live as comfortably as the richest boys of the school.

I occasionally glanced across the room at Rosen-cranz. Several times I saw him peer around suspiciously. My curiosity was aroused and I watched him furtively. I soon detected that he was reading a little volume lying between his large folio of Talmud with a guilty air like one counting counterfeits. I stole softly behind him, and glancing over his shoulder I saw that the characters of the book were Russian.

He was startled as he looked up, and hastily covered the pages of the book with both hands.

"Don't be afraid," I said. "I merely wished to know what you were reading."

His face grew pale. At first he could not answer; then he stammered: "It is no—nothing."

"I won't denounce you," I reassured him. "You may show me the little book."

He stared at me dubiously. But there really was but one course open to him—to take me into his confidence. He looked about fearfully, as if he did not trust the vacancy of the large room. Then he said in a low voice: "This is Pushkin." And looking up to me he continued: "Oh, perhaps you don't know who Pushkin is. He is the greatest Russian

poet, and his verses are so beautifully wild that they almost tear my heart when I read them."

I looked incredulous. I wished not to disclose to him the fact that I had read Pushkin. Pretending perfect ignorance and innocence, I returned: "I would not read such poems."

"Ah! it is because you do not understand them," he rejoined warmly, and his black eyes sparkled. "If you did you would forget eating and drinking and sleeping and do nothing but read his verses. It makes your heart throb and the blood in your veins run warmer, swifter. It is not like the Talmud—it is more inspiring, more elevating."

I stared amazed. This from Rosencranz's lips!

I still feigned innocence: "But they are gentile books! How can you compare them to the Talmud?"

He concealed Pushkin in his trousers pocket and paused meditatively a few minutes, as if he were hesitating whether or not to speak. The dawn shone through the long, arched windows of the seminary, and Rosencranz's face grew paler and more greenish from the cold morning light. Then he clasped me by the hand and spoke impulsively: "You are blind—you are blind. Do not remain in darkness and nebulous superstition. Flee from the narrow compass of the synagogue. There is a larger, greater, grander sphere than that circumscribed by the boundaries of the orthodox faith. The world is not as gloomy and sordid as you have

experienced it in the enclosure of our self-made Ghetto. Waste no more of your profitable youth and vigour of boyhood on the almost obsolete genius of ancient generations. Not everything that is old is necessarily sacred, and nothing is sacred because it is old. Idolatry is the oldest worship, for that matter. It is the feeble element in man that reveres age: the more vigorous vitality sympathises with old age, but never venerates it."

He spoke fervently; his eyes glowed with inspiration. I drank in every word that fell from his mouth, as if it came from the lips of a prophet.

"Many youths," he continued zealously, "who are endowed with Hebrew genius and who should be the torch-bearers of true civilisation and enlightenment are rotting away in the swamps of the synagogue. Ah, how many brilliant gems—myriads of them—sink in the bottomless Talmudic mire! Russia—Lithuania in particular—is an inestimable gold-mine, but there are no speculators found to work it. Oh, the Talmud! the Talmud!" he cried out with real pain and agony, his lips trembling with agitation, "that golden chain that throttles the Jewish youths of Russia! Does not the Talmud itself say, in commenting on the verse 'He hath set me in dark places' [Lamentations], that means the Babylonian Talmud? But our people are beginning to open their eyes now that the Czar has opened the schools to us. Ah! one decade of toleration and liberty, and our people will flourish as in the days of old. It takes

other nations a century to make a progressive step, but it takes the Jews only a generation, a quarter of a century, if liberty be given them, to overtake them all. Awake, Israel! The hour is striking now. If you oversleep this chance, God knows when the hour will strike for you again."

He thus poured forth his feelings, tears glistening in his eyes. He laid bare before me the conditions of our faith, the absurd system of the Yeshiva, how much energy was wasted on useless studies while there were so many better, more useful, nobler things for which to spend one's life. He told me of a secret society to which he belonged, whose object was the promulgation of liberal ideas, and he urged me to join it and come into the light. All this stirred the slumbering feelings of my soul, revived the dying recollections of Russian literature—of Katia, and made me think and doubt.

The door of the Yeshiva opened softly, and Rabbi Brill, clad in a long, light robe, with Tephilim (phylacteries) on his head, stepped in like an apparition. He held his Mishna-pocket-edition in one hand, with his index finger between the leaves, and with the other he was fondling the straps that hung down from the Tephilim. He stopped in front of Nehemiah and me, and smiling benignly said in his fatherly, care-taking, hoarse voice, "The Yeshiva is imposing a too heavy burden on you children—always Nehemiah and Israel," and he tapped us on the shoulders in a most paternal manner. And

raising his eyes to the long clock that hung on the wall at the entrance, he added: "So late, and only two of you?"

CHAPTER XVII

I BEGIN TO DOUBT

FAITH is like a heap of dry sand: unmolested it may lie for ages, but as soon as one grain of it is disturbed by the slightest wind, it crumbles away until there is no trace of it left.

Neither my stay with Judge Bialnick nor the fiery arguments of Ephraim had shaken my belief in the least. The exulting talk of Rosencranz would likewise have had no permanent effect upon me had he not immediately begun to take advantage of the impression he had made. The following day he gave me Spinoza's Ethics. That book shattered my peaceful belief in a theological God. The next book—which he borrowed for me and brought to my lodgings hidden under his coat—was "The Blunderer in the Paths of Life." My heart throbbed violently as I glanced at its title. This novel, which had just appeared, was the dread of the rabbis and fanatics and was condemned by the Jewish clergy. The vital genius of its author shook the very foundation of Judaism. It was a book filled with graphic descriptions of our sordid Jewish life and caustic criticism of our absurd

religious customs. I also found myself a blunderer in the paths of life.

I raced feverishly through volumes of philosophy, history, and literature. As I plunged deeper and deeper into modern studies (as I called everything that was not Talmudic) a scorn for theology, and for Jewish learning in particular, arose in my heart. Finally I accepted two philosophic truths: "By good, I understand that which we know is positively useful to us. By evil, I understand that which we positively know hinders us from possessing anything that is good." And I asked myself: "Am I pursuing good by the study of the Talmud? Do I not positively know that this hinders me from possessing everything that is good?" I shuddered as I answered myself.

I told Nehemiah of my thoughts, and he smiled, saying: "Well, you are already saved. The knowledge of one's ignorance is wisdom."

CHAPTER XVIII

I AM BETRAYED

As Shmunke spent about eighteen hours daily in the Yeshiva, I pursued my new studies in our room without fear of detection. Shmunke's fanaticism reached the point where religion and barbarism meet. He would not look into a mirror because he regarded such an act effeminate, and he would not pass between two women on the ground of immorality. He not only bore the yoke of orthodoxy, but he even hated with the zealous hatred of a savage any one who did not bear it. However, I little suspected that he was spying upon me.

One cold, rainy spring morning, several months after I began my new studies, I was brooding over a big folio of Talmud, though my thoughts were far from the subject before me, when the Mashgiach's assistant came up to me and whispered in my ear that I should forthwith appear before Rabbi Brill. I followed him out of the Yeshiva into the Rabbi's study, my brain filled with wild fears of evil. Rabbi Brill sat in his large arm-chair, his face clouded with sadness. His young wife stood haughtily in the doorway between the library and the adjoining room. Behind the Rabbi's chair stood the Mash-

giach and his scouts. The looks of all of them pinned me as I stepped over the threshold: the bigotry of a Torquemada was stamped on each face except that of the Rosh-H'Shiva. One of the scouts held a bundle of books under his arm. At the sight of these a chill went through me. I knew my fate.

"You are Israel Teploffker, and you have your lodgings with Menke the tailor, hey?" inquired the Mashgiach in his hissing, whistle-like voice.

I made no answer.

"Are these books yours?" he demanded, pointing at the bundle under the scout's arm.

I still made no reply. There was such a whirl of emotions within me that I could not have spoken had I wanted to. Rabbi Brill held his sad, piercing eyes fixed on me and sighed softly.

"So you confess, Teploffker," hissed the Mashgiach again, "that these 'Epicurean books' are your property and that you have read them?"

My hatred of orthodoxy suddenly flamed up. I was on the point of answering the Mashgiach by bursting into a fierce denunciation of Judaism, but Rabbi Brill ordered them all out of the room by a wave of his hand. I was following, knowing well my sentence, when the Rabbi's voice, hoarse as if choked with tears, checked me.

"Listen, my child. I accepted you in this institution when no other place was open to you. I allowed you a stipend almost beyond my power.

I did this all for you with the understanding that you should study the Talmud. But you have devoted your time to other things—to Haskolo; you are worshipping strange gods. Modern culture is like poison—a cure to one, death to another. To Judaism it is death.”

He rose from his seat, and laying his hand gently on my shoulder he continued: “Ah, the young generation! Our young men do not realise the preciousness of the Talmud. It is now, as it has been in centuries past, our stronghold and a pillar of light that has guided us through all darkness. But for it, what would become of our Jewish brains, dulled by gentile cruelty and persecution? And what would our morals be but for its mighty influence? What became of the Karraites after they abandoned the Talmud? Talmud is like salt, which must be preserved, if not for its own sake, for the preservation of the Jew. Its beautiful legends, its instructive precepts, its ethical fables, its brilliant sayings, and the vigorous genius that permeates every line of it—ah! the Talmud, and the Talmud only, has made the Jew indestructible, everlasting!”

The Rabbi's voice had become mournful, and tears were trickling down his face. “The gaudy appearance of European civilisation is dazzling the eyes of our young. The same was true when Greece was in its glory; then the Jews wished to shine as Hellenes, not as Jews. The same happened a short

while ago in Germany; the same is going on now in our own land. Ah"—he sighed deeply, and a stream of tears gushed forth over his already wet cheeks—"it is either to remain a Jew in the old sense or give up Judaism entirely. The inherent faculty of criticism in our race in a scientific age will not tolerate Judaism or any other religion. The gentile can be cultured and still remain true to his faith, but the Jew is too critical for that. It is either belief and dogma or science and infidelism. What has become of most of the followers of Mendelssohn, who planned so wisely and sincerely? The great Rabbi and philosopher would return to his grave had he risen to behold the result of his arduous labour. Only Moses Mendelssohn could be learned in philosophy and be a Jew. Woe! Woe!" and the Rabbi's tears streamed down faster and faster. "Even his own offspring, his sons and daughters, turned their backs on the faith of their noble father. The invention killed the inventor."

I listened to all this with a drooping head. When he had finished he delivered the sentence I expected—I must leave the Yeshiva at once.

I hurried to my lodgings. Entering the house, I found my landlord, Menke, at his working-table, with a disengaged needle in his hand, his spectacles lowered almost to the very end of his nose, one leg thrown over the other in reflective forgetfulness. His wife, at his side, had the little finger of her left hand between her lips, her right hand supporting

the elbow of the left, and when I came in she moved slightly forward and heaved a deep sigh.

My appearance evidently disconcerted them. After Menke swallowed a lump and feigned a faint cough, he began to say something, but a glance of his helpmeet silenced him, and without addressing any one in particular she said: "Oi! oi! what have we come to in these days!" and her "Oi!" seemed to find an echo in her husband's heart. "Oi!" he also intoned, and then remained sitting and looking abstractedly with the disengaged needle in his hand.

"He!" she proceeded dismally, swaying her heavily bewigged head. "Who ever heard of such gzeires [fatal decrees] in former years? Who ever heard of 'Epicurean books'? Nu! nu! what an age we live in! Would that my eyes had not seen it! We took him [this to her husband] into our home to be an associate to Shmunke, who is a blessing to the town, and now at last even Israel Teploffker falls into Satan's snares. Nu! what an age we live in!"

Menke was again about to say something, but was silenced by another look from his spouse.

I came into my room. My trunk, or rather the wooden box that served as a trunk, was broken open, and all my books and papers were gone. As I stood gazing at my few pieces of underwear that had been thrown out of the box and now lay scattered about the room, Shmunke appeared.

"Epicurean, renegade, apostate, sinner in Israel," he accosted me in his nasal voice, "you have polluted our house with your unclean books. The Talmud in Sanhedrin says: 'He who reads sacrilegious books will not enter the kingdom of heaven.' I watched you for a long while," he continued zealously, swinging his long arms like the revolving wings of a windmill, "until, thank God! I could inform the authorities in the proper time. And you get out of this house this very minute."

I did not answer a word. I gathered my few belongings from the floor and rolled them into a bundle. "Indeed, this very minute," added Shmunke's mother, who had followed him into our room. "I cannot keep you in my house a half-second. Oh! oh! the *chorem* [ban]! Only four years ago the two daughters of 'Avremil der Schwarze' died in one night because Rabbi Brill put the ban on them, and the Mashgiach told me I must drive you out of the house without a second's delay or the ban will follow." Groone wrung her hands as she delivered this monologue.

"Oh! oh! the *chorem*!" Menke also ventured the remark, but a glance from Groone seemed to put him off again, and he went on stitching the stiff lining on his lap.

Like Adam and Eve, "some natural tears I dropped, but wiped them soon," and "with wandering steps and slow" I took my solitary way from this Paradise, watched by the piercing glances of the

cherubim, Menke and Groone, and in dread of the flaming sword, Shmunke, "which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

CHAPTER XIX

I WANDER AGAIN

WHEN driven out of my Garden of Eden I repaired to the synagogue. In Lithuania the synagogue is a lyceum where the most erudite of the Jewish community come together of an evening to vie in advancing hair-splitting arguments and technical rigmarole of the Talmud; a board of trade where business men discuss market prices and competition; a club where friends meet to chat over a cigarette or a pipe; a center of gossip where everybody talks of everybody else; a place of refuge for the poor against whom every other place is closed; and sometimes an arena where knotty fingers and matted beards come in close contact, and hats, like comets, fly in the air.

So to the synagogue I went to spend the night. Now while I write I see myself sitting in a corner, between two tall book-cases crammed with ancient volumes, and near the Dutch oven that reached to the high ceiling. My eyes are so blurred with tears that everything about me is watery and dark. I stare stupidly in front of me without thinking of anything in particular. Fragments of the past come and go like small tatters of clouds in a stormy

sky; they shift and float and drive one another, but I see nothing clear, nothing definite. One moment I think of the present, and my heart swells with deadly hatred against the Jews and their religion and their rabbis. Another moment my anger against my own people is allayed. I recall Judge Bialnick; I think of the peasant's confession; I vaguely reflect upon the incidents of my father's death. And again my sore heart smarts and burns with hatred—not against the Jews, but against the world that enslaved and degraded them. And again the Jew—the old generation—the young generation—prejudice; and again my brain burns with fever at the cruelty of their fanaticism. Ah, Katia! Katia! like a flash of lightning that splits the clouds asunder, her face, her voice, the vivid recollections of her charming ways recurred to my mind. Ah, Katia! Katia! the lapse intervening between her and the present vanishes, and my heart is yearning, craving, burning with anguish and desire to see her, to talk to her, to ask her for help.

Toward morning one desire took definite shape amid the chaos of my mind—a desire to emancipate myself from the Jewish bondage, to become free—free, and cast off the yoke that crushed my father, my grandfather, and his father before him—to work and work and work and become—not a great rabbi, who sinks in the mire of superstition and fanaticism—but a great man such as Katia wished to see me, like Pushkin or Gogol or Lermontoff.

Thus my whole past flashed through my mind, and the present stood before me in all its grimness. My heart became oppressed with bitterness. I wished I could cry aloud, so that the big synagogue, the market-place, the town, and the surrounding fields and forests and brooks and ponds would echo again and again the great anguish of my soul.

At daybreak I took my little bundle under my arm and left the synagogue. I had decided to go to Vilno. Vilno was the Lithuanian Jerusalem, where the Jews were already awakening from their fanatical slumber. There perhaps I might find means to continue my "modern studies" in the gymnasium. I had no money to hire a coach, so I made up my mind to walk. The distance was only a hundred versts, and I could get there on foot in four days.

At the close of the day I arrived at a small town wholly inhabited by Jews. As I came into the principal thoroughfare, the Beadle, with his head thrown back and his hands over his ears, rushed through the streets proclaiming in stentorian voice, "*In Shool Herein!*" which was the signal for merchants to close their places of business and go to the synagogue. I was reminded that it was Friday. As I was hungry and fatigued from my long trip, I decided, if I could get a place to stay, to remain here over the Sabbath.

I went to the synagogue and inquired for the

Shammes (sexton). I found him standing on a high chair, with several assistants around him, lighting the candles of the traditional Menorah (candlestick). He was a dwarfish man with wet *peiis* and a shiny forehead. In response to my question as to whether he could procure me a place in which to stay over the Sabbath, he shrugged his shoulders and grumbled: "Too late now—too late." However, after I had incidentally informed him that I came from Javolin Yeshiva a certain deference came into his manner and he said: "Stay here till after service."

I was ashamed to beg, but what will not a person do when he is tired and hungry, without a farthing in his pocket? After service the dwarfish Shammes invited me to follow him to the entrance hall. I took my stand beside him at the door and patiently waited.

"Gut Shabbos—Gut Shabbos," the worshipers saluted each other, every face wearing a look of contentment; "Gut Shabbos," the children greeted their fathers; "Gut Shabbos," the poor submissively greeted the rich; "Gut Shabbos," the humble beggars greeted everybody; "Gut Shabbos—Gut Shabbos," kept on buzzing in the synagogue as the large crowd passed through the narrow hallway.

Presently the Shammes, who had been scanning the passersby, stopped one of the worshipers—a venerable-looking man with a fine, broad, jet-black beard and happy, smiling eyes, who was followed

by two men, one on crutches and the other with an empty, dangling sleeve. "Gut Shabbos, Reb* Dovidle—Gut Shabbos," the Shammes greeted him.

"Gut Shabbos, Reb Samson," returned Reb Dovidle.

"Reb Dovidle," proceeded the Shammes respectfully, and scratching the back of his head, "a—Reb Dovidle—a—a young man—a—a—a student from Javolin—a——"

"Indeed! indeed!" the good-natured Reb Dovidle interrupted him. "I always like to have Mezumen [three men to the benediction] at my table. Why, certainly, let him come."

Samson introduced me to Reb Dovidle, who extended me a cordial invitation to remain with him over the Sabbath.

As Reb Dovidle, his young son, whom he led by the hand, and I approached his house, two little children came running to meet their father, with joyous shouting: "Gut Shabbos, papa—Gut Shabbos." He bent down, kissed them, and the children clung to the skirts of his frock coat. Opening the door, Reb Dovidle greeted in a low cadence of voice: "Gut Shabbos, Gittele—Gut Shabbos."

His wife, Gittele, beamed with joy and her diamond ear-rings twinkled as they bobbed in the light of the candle on the table. Everybody looked happy—Sabbath eve spoke from every face. Reb Dovidle kissed his dark-haired daughter, leaned

* Used in the sense of Mr.

his hands on the little children's head and murmured a blessing. Then walking leisurely up and down the room and clapping his hands gleefully, he hummed: "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is above rubies. The heart of her husband does safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy," etc.

Thus hummed the happy Reb Dovidle in Hebrew, and his soft voice quavered in quaint undulations while he beamed upon his wife and children "like olive plants round about the table." Gittele read in a low tone: "Peace be to you, angels of service, angels eternal of the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He."

During the meal Reb Dovidle asked me how long I had stayed at Javolin and where I was going, to which I replied (with shame do I record it) not the truth, but rather what I thought best for me. Then he asked me if I knew of a young man who would like to teach Hebrew in a small village about fifteen miles away. Without waiting for my answer he added: "The work would not be hard. My brother-in-law has only a little boy of about seven and a daughter of about seventeen. The instructor would have to be with them only a few hours a day."

I was silent a moment. It occurred to me that

here was a good opportunity to make a little money to tide me through my first uncertain weeks in Vilno. So I told him I was willing to accept such a position myself for the summer.

And early Sunday morning I started for Dubrovka, armed with a letter of introduction to Mr. Nosen Takiff.

CHAPTER XX

I BECOME A TEACHER

I HAD no difficulty in finding the house of Mr. Takiff, for Reb Dovidle had told me he was an inn-keeper, and that there was but one inn in this little straggling village. The long corridor which ran through the center of the inn to the bar-room was crowded with half-drunken peasants, who jostled me as I picked my way through them, and the bar-room, hazy with the smoke of vile tobacco, was also filled with vodka-soaked muzhiks, who laughed and jabbered and swore.

"Play!" a drunken peasant roared at a flaxen-haired lad who stood in the middle of the room tightening the keys of a violin.

"Play, Vanka, play!" several other voices broke out impatiently at the fiddler.

"Hey, Vanka, *Kraskucha* [a peasant's dance]!" cried a robust muzhik beauty, with a red-and-blue dotted kerchief covering her sandy hair and with a strand of green beads around her full neck.

"A *Kraskucha*! a *Kraskucha*!" the crowd approved vociferously; and in appreciation of the girl who proposed the dance a peasant embraced her and kissed her on the mouth. Then came the

scraping of the violin, stamping of feet, jostling, pushing, hugging, slapping, shouting, whistling, laughing, and the uproarious dance was on again.

A few minutes of this sufficed for me. I asked of the man who was serving the drinks for the master of the house, and was led across a narrow passage which separated the inn from Mr. Takiff's living quarters into a comfortably furnished sitting-room. An elderly woman with a frank, genial face greeted me.

"My husband will soon be at leisure, and will be only too glad to see you," she said after I had told her I had a letter of introduction to him. "Perhaps you are hungry?" she immediately added. And turning around, she spoke to a dark-eyed girl who sat reading at the other end of the room: "Malke, dear, show this young man into the dining-room."

Very much pleased with this cordial welcome, I followed the young girl.

Soon the innkeeper appeared, slowly puffing at a long-stemmed pipe. Though at first sight he seemed to me an old man, on account of his round, gray beard, he was no more than forty-five. He was tall and strongly built, and had a full white face with a small, thin nose (the Jew's nose is not as long as it is pictured) and with brown eyes that sparkled with youth. He wore a velvet skull-cap and a long, black frock.

He shook me by the hand warmly, and settling

himself in a chair opposite me began to read the letter I had handed him.

As his daughter set the meal before me I placed my hands over my eyes, as if from fatigue, and scrutinised her through my fingers. Her face was decidedly handsome. Her nose, like her father's, was of Russian type, and her eyes were black and almond-shaped; her lips were red and slightly curled, and her complexion was a warm, rosy brown; and when she put the knife and fork on the table I noticed that her fingers were white and long.

Mr. Takiff looked up from his letter long enough to glance at the table. "Malke," he said to his daughter, "you have forgotten the salt. You are dreamy of late, my child."

A faint blush passed over her face. She smiled and murmured some excuse, which afforded me a chance to see her white teeth and the little dimples in her cheeks. While I ate the savoury meal that the girl had placed before me, the innkeeper smoked silently at his long pipe and observed me thoughtfully.

"My brother-in-law writes me," he began, after I had drawn away from the table, "that you will be willing to stay here and teach my daughter and son Hebrew and the Prophets."

I corroborated Reb Dovidle's statement, and said that I would do my best with his children if he saw fit to employ me.

With that we went forthwith to business, and

after we had agreed as to the terms I was formally engaged as instructor to the innkeeper's two children.

CHAPTER XXI

I FIND MY DUTIES VERY AGREEABLE

THE following day my duties began. It is true the time spent with little Jacob was a trifle monotonous and irksome, but the hours spent in instructing Malke were not at all tedious. From the first I found pleasure in her lesson period, and this pleasure grew keener and keener. She was of a naturally happy disposition, mirthful and witty, but at times melancholy fits would come upon her, and she would mope about the house with a sad, far-away look in her eyes. I could not understand these widely varying moods, but I had a faint feeling that she was being preyed upon by some secret grief.

My time, aside from that devoted to my pupils, was also well spent. The climate was fresh and wholesome, the environing scenery picturesque, a large forest at a stone's throw, and my many hours of leisure afforded me ample opportunity for meditation and day-dreams in which I took infinite delight. For appearance's sake I kept a volume of Talmud in my room, though I never opened it, and in its stead I made good use of a number of literary works which I found in Malke's library, as well as

of the Bible, which, in spite of my skepticism, was my favourite book. And at night, alone in my quiet chamber, I would lie awake and think of the past—always of the incidents of the past; the future stood hazily before me like a prophecy, on which I never cared to dwell too long. In such moments my thoughts would travel back to Katia, and with one arm thrown loosely over my eyes and my face turned ceilingward I would muse for hours. The remembrance of her father, like a tatter of cloud, would soon begin to eclipse the happy light of my mind, but each time I would relegate this thought by sheer force of will, and continue my delightful rumination undisturbed. At last my heavenly dream would end in a crushing sense of hopelessness. I would become conscious, as we often do in dreams, that I was merely dreaming a dream that could never come true. And slowly this charming vision would move back, back, and then sink lower and lower, like a setting sun, and a new phantasm would take its place. Vaguely I would begin to think of my pupil; indefinitely her expressive look would stand before me; faintly her voice, full of pathos, would ring in my ears; and little by little I would become possessed with a feeling, a desire, as uncertain as the image in my mind's eye. I would thus continue to muse until all else would leave my brain except the thought of Malke. The last thought would lend speed to the beating of my heart and would stir my passions. "She seems

to find no interest in me" would flash through my mind. And insignificant little incidents which had passed between Malke and me would immediately spring to memory, defining more clearly the thought that had just crossed my mind. This thought would fill me with burning jealousy, and jealousy would arouse my feelings. The more I thought of Malke's indifference to me, the more I desired her friendship—her affections, if possible.

These half-jealous, half-arduous sentiments finally got full possession of my heart and brain. The lessons began duly with the opening of a book, but hardly ever proceeded further than a few half-hearted questions and aimless answers. Then we would forget the lesson and talk disjointedly or remain silent, each engrossed in secret thoughts. Malke would sit looking out of the window, her cheeks all aglow with a feeling for which I could see no cause, and I—poor bundle of sentiments—would interrupt this silence at intervals only to talk as none but imbeciles and lovers can, while the slumbering passions of a recluse stirred me to a fury.

She was always frank and natural with me; she treated me much as she might have treated a brother of her own age. She would pull my hair and stroke my chin playfully, and she found great delight in teasing me. I resented both her sisterly attitude and the jests at my expense. Frequently her witty remarks made me writhe, and I would

decide that if she again spoke to me in that way I would pay her back in the same coin. But I never did. In her presence I was as submissive as a faithful dog.

But there were some happy moments—when she would gaze dreamily at me with those strange eyes of hers, her hair falling loosely over her white forehead, her breast quickly heaving. I would beguile myself for a few throbbing moments with the hope that these looks betokened love for me, and I would forget all else. My ambition to become a distinguished man, my hopes to make a name for myself as Katia wished me to do—even thoughts of Katia, who had aroused in me this ambition—would quickly vanish, and my only desire would be to stay in Dubrovka and give instructions to this country girl forever and ever.

Every morning, when the rising sun was streaking the window-panes of my chamber with purple light, I would quickly dress, seize the Prophets or Psalms, and run out into the blooming garden which was in front of Malke's chamber. I would stretch myself upon the grassy ground, and with an open book in my hand lose myself in the divine poetry of the king of prophets, Isaiah, or reflect upon the consoling, soul-inspiring verses of David. I would look up to the blushing sky above, to the verdant trees all around, the floating sunbeams, feel the cool earth beneath me—then, ah! then I would fathom the great singer's meaning! "Who covereth

Himself with light as with a garment; who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of His chambers in the water; who maketh the clouds His chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind. He sendeth the streams into the valleys which run among the hills; by them the fowls of the heavens have their habitation, which sing among the branches; the trees of the Lord are full of sap. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! The earth is full of Thy riches. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have being." Homer, Virgil, Chaucer, Heine, Byron, Shelley—who of them could express so much beauty in lines so few?

One morning, as I lay stretched on the ground, reading and pronouncing the lyrical words of Psalms which chimed in my ears like exquisite music, Malke opened the window of her chamber and thrust out her head. Her eyes were only half open, and the mist of sleep was still hovering over her face.

"Why did you get up so early?" she asked me, and faintly blushing as she covered her partly exposed bosom with her naked hand.

I raised my eyes to hers, and beholding her head resting between her hands, her luxuriant hair hanging down her bare neck like a loosened skein of silk, her rising and falling breast between her arms, I faltered shyly, "Ah, it is so beautiful!"

and I spread my arms and dropped them in despair.

She smiled, blushed, and lowering her head she asked me to pluck a violet for her.

I was delighted to obey her, to be of some service to her, to please every whim and fancy of hers.

As I handed the flower to her she bent forward through the open window, and smelling the violet she murmured, "What a delicious fragrance!" and glanced blushing at my face with a charming twinkle in her eyes.

She remained leaning on the window-sill and staring in front of her meditatively, while I gazed and gazed at her face, that spoke of unsatiable life, youth, passion, beauty. The garden with those many trees and shrubs and flowers and birds, the shimmering sky, the spreading sunbeams, the verdant earth, the delicious air, the blooming maiden with that wondering gaze of hers—ah! Nature in all her splendour and supreme beauty stood before me.

She again glanced at me, with a sad smile playing around her lips, and with, what I thought, teasing mockery she said in a very low tone, "Ah, it is so beautiful!" and her pretty head disappeared.

I threw myself upon the ground with the book clasped to my breast, and looked listlessly at the bits of sky screened by the branches above me.

In my heart I felt a longing mixed with venom. She was so near to me, and yet her confidence in

me, her frankness, her calmness, her self-possession in my presence, indicated the distance between us.

Thus passed the summer in a state of doubt and despair. Malke grew more and more absent-minded and melancholy. She frequently spoke to me of her lack of friends, of the monotony of her life, and expressed a longing to visit theaters and attend balls as did ladies of big cities.

One day she asked abruptly: "Israel, is it such a great sin to marry a gentile? Magdeline Grubovski, the surveyor's daughter, says she would marry a Jew if she only loved him, and she is a Christian. Why should it be a greater sin for a Jew to marry a Christian?"

I could give no definite answer to this, so I said nothing. Then she resumed: "I like Magdeline so much. She has parties and balls, and oh! what nice, gallant gentlemen come to her! I have been invited many times, but I do not like to go there because the young men call me 'pretty Jewess,' and they seem to take more liberties with me than with Magdeline. But they are so pleasant, so polite. Isn't Count Losjinski handsome? Did you notice how erect he walks? How beautiful his long, black mustache becomes his dark-blue eyes! He always pulls and twirls his mustache when he talks to me, and he acts very strangely. Once he said to father—in a joke, of course—that if he could get a girl like me——" Here she burst into feigned laughter and covered her blushing face with both hands.

"Isn't it nice of him to say that? He's a count and owns this village and the next, and what a palace he has! Think of his marrying a plain Jewish girl—— Why do you keep so quiet, Israel?" she asked abruptly. "You're always angry at me when I speak of Count Losjinski. You're a good little tutor, nevertheless," she added, emphasising every syllable by stroking my chin in a playful manner and laughing sweetly. How little I understood the world or even myself! I did not know that there is something deeper in words than the mere meaning of them; that things spoken are only a part of what one wishes to convey; that in order to understand a person, one must be able to divine that part of his thought which remains unsaid. The first instructor of this enigmatic language is love, and the best pupil is the lover.

Not long after this, Count Losjinski stopped for a few minutes at the inn. His coachman, who was a baptised Jew, amused the bar-room by talking Yiddish and reciting Hebrew blessings, which we thought very strange. Malke's little brother asked his father what became of the coachman's soul when he turned Christian. The innkeeper smilingly replied that after the conversion the Jewish soul was changed into a gentile one. Malke wondered very much and could not see the difference.

"Papa, what is the soul, anyhow?" Malke asked her father with a pensive air.

"A soul is that part of godliness," explained her father, "that every Jew possesses."

"Has not a gentile that part of godliness in him, father?" asked the girl again.

"This is too deep for you to understand, my child," responded Mr. Takiff, and puffed at his pipe. "You're a girl, and a woman's brain is not able to comprehend such serious problems. A Jew whose soul was present on Mount Sinai when the Torah was given to Israel, as the Talmud says, has got that part of godliness because he answered: 'All that the Lord spoke we will do and hear.'"

This explanation did not seem to satisfy Malke. "Will not the gentiles have Gan-Eden [heaven], father?" she resumed. "Not even Count Losjinski, who is so good to every one and favours the Jewish people in particular?"

"Oh, yes, my daughter. The Talmud also says: 'All good gentiles will have the world to come. In heaven all will be Jews.'"

"It will be so nice," laughed Malke. "All will be alike and there will be no more Jews and gentiles, but all the same, and the Jews will be permitted to own land in their own names, like gentiles, and will be allowed to live everywhere, even in St. Petersburg and Moscow."

"Oh, you fool!" interrupted her little brother. "In Gan-Eden all the noblemen will make fire in Jewish houses and snuff the candles on Shabbos. And Vanka, who calls me Christ-killer, will carry

mamma's prayer-book to the synagogue on Shabbos. It will be so nice!" The innocent little martyr, who already bore the yoke of the Torah, clapped his wee hands and danced with joy.

CHAPTER XXII

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

MRS. TAKIFF often sighed because Malkele, as she fondly called her daughter, was already going on eighteen and there was "nothing suitable" for her. *Shadchonim* (marriage brokers) proposed many bridegrooms, and each one whispered to Reb Nosen (as they addressed him) that he had the very best article in the market. But none quite satisfied the innkeeper. As for Malke, who of course was never consulted when the merits of the various candidates were being considered, she was as heedless of all this matrimonial talk of her parents as if she had been a girl of twelve.

One afternoon at the end of August we were in the sitting-room—Mr. Takiff, in his big arm-chair before an open window, puffing at his long pipe, Mrs. Takiff mending a stocking, Malke working over a piece of embroidery, and I scanning the pages of a Russian book—when Koppel the Shadchan, who had taken a keen interest in Malke's future, appeared before the window at which Mr. Takiff sat.

"Good afternoon, Reb Nosen," he said, with his indolent, oily smile on his face.

"*Sholom Aleichem*," returned Mr. Takiff, offering his hand through the open window. "How do you come here at this time of the day?"

"What a question—ha! ha! ha! ha!" The Shadchan's laugh was dry and cackling. "Isn't a person allowed to pay you a visit? When one has merchandise he should not close the door against a prospective purchaser." And winking significantly he cackled again.

"Well, Reb Koppel, well," rejoined Mr. Takiff somewhat eagerly, "anything new?"

"Sure, indeed, Reb Nosen. The very article you are looking for is at hand, and one to suit—I should rather say becoming—an honourable Jew like Reb Nosen Takiff. Well"—spreading his arms—"a young man who is a rarity among millions—millions, I say; of the very, very choicest in the realm of Lithuania. An Illui upon whom thousands of wealthy fathers are casting their eyes and are trying to take him into their nets. 'But no, no,' said I to myself, and my wife said the very same, 'this goldfish must go to no one else but Reb Nosen's daughter.' You see"—he drew an old, dirty, tattered note-book from his pocket—"Baas Reb Nosen L'Javolin Illui [the daughter of Nosen for the Javolin prodigy]. He! he! he! Koppel the Shadchan is no fool."

"Well, well, come into the house and let me hear what you have to say."

The Shadchan disappeared from the window and

a moment later was with us in the sitting-room. He had an extinguished corn-cob pipe in his mouth, and he playfully swung a gnarled cane between his thumb and forefinger, which were yellow from the tobacco he snuffed. He was a man of medium size, with a weazened head, which he carried bent slightly forward and to one side. His eyes, set deep in their sockets, were overhung by shaggy eyebrows; his beard, though thin, was broad and long, and his *peiis* fell to his shoulders. He wore a long caftan, the skirt of which registered his movements on his shining boots, into the tops of which his trousers were stuck. The caftan was of a distinguished appearance, parted in the back in the fashion of a frock coat, but pinned together at the very bottom so that it might be technically regarded as having but two corners and so be exempt from *tzitzis*.* Only the lowest button of his coat was fastened; the upper part hung loosely forward, exposing a large red handkerchief protruding from his inside pocket, where a snuff-box could invariably be found.

"Good morning, bride," the Shadchan bowed to Malke, who blushed scarlet at this salutation.

"Go, my daughter, to the next room," said Mr. Takiff. "We have something to talk about which is not fit you should hear."

Malke left the room, agitated and blushing. But

*Fringes, which, according to some rabbinical law, four-corner garments are to have.

I, in an agony of expectation, pretended not to hear the last remark and remained in my seat.

The Shadchan took off his hat, leaving his head covered with an old, threadbare skull-cap, and settled himself in a chair which the host pushed toward him. Koppel dropped a large pinch of snuff into the hollow of his left hand, and raising it to his nostrils drew in the pungent stuff with one long breath.

"Pshtzi! pshtzi! pshtzi!" he sneezed three times, applying the red handkerchief to his nose as a protection for his host.

"I can never start a conversation of any importance before I take a little snuff," the Shadchan commented, wiping his mouth and nose. "It clears my mind and eyes, and I tell you, Reb Nosen, I become fresh and vigorous after a little sneezing. It is simply a refreshment—a restorer of strength. And I tell you there is none better than Kalman's snuff in the whole world. It's a real heaven on earth, so help me God, and it prepares me for active work. By the way, snuff does not cost me anything. Kalman promised to give me as much as I want gratis, in addition to the five per cent. commission he paid me for the match of his daughter."

"Of the snuff we'll talk later," said Nosen a little impatiently. "Let us approach our subject."

"God be with you, Reb Nosen, have not the Talmud sages said: 'Matchmaking is as hard as the task of Moses in dividing the waters of the

Red Sea'? The Talmud also says, 'Be patient in your judgment,' and we must weigh our words before we decide. Well, now, Reb Nosen, I'll light one of your Prussian cigars, and we'll instantly proceed to business."

Mr. Takiff took the hint and handed him a cigar.

"In short," the Shadchan resumed, "I have for you a young man—a jewel, a gem, whose real value a Rothschild only could pay for; and furthermore, a real *Talmud-Chochom Ben Talmid-Chochom* [a disciple of wisdom, the son of another]. As the Talmud says: 'One should give his daughter in marriage to the son of the Law.' The truth is"—here he stretched his neck and emitted a thin curl of smoke—"that I am too ignorant to mention the qualities that prodigy possesses. A young man that has the six parts of the Talmud at his fingers' ends, and can tell the word a hundred pages ahead if you stick a pin through a certain spot; a wonderful scribe whose handwriting is like print, and who can read *Poskim* [a digest of the Talmud] in his sleep, so may the Creator of the universe—blessed be His name!—help me to accomplish my undertaking in a happy hour. Of course you know Rabbi Brill of Javolin; he told me that the young man is a shining star in Israel whose brilliancy will illumine our holy people in exile. As to his personal beauty"—here he shrugged his shoulders and made a motion with his hands as if to drive away an imaginary opponent—"he looks like an angel. God's grace

rests upon him. Tall, majestic, and in his white-and-crimson face there is the reflection of angels, so may the Lord send a blessing wherever I turn."

He paused for a moment to wipe the perspiration from his forehead. Nosen Takiff nodded his head in silent approval.

"As to the dowry," the Shadchan continued, "we have little to say. He has been offered ten thousand and fifteen thousand rubles, but of course to an aristocrat like Reb Nosen—well, he would go for a little less. I believe you once told me that you were willing to give your daughter six thousand rubles. Well, when you get such a rare gem you will not mind to add two thousand. This young man is worth every penny of it, so help me the One Above—every *groschen*. Yes, this is what I call a bargain which could not be had by the richest of our brethren. Why, did you never hear of the Javolin Illui?" He looked with such astonishment at Mr. Takiff that the latter blushed at his own ignorance.

"So may the Holy One—blessed be He!—help me find suitors for my own marriageable daughters—even babes have heard of him! Oh, Reb Israel," he turned to me, as if just seeing me, "you here! I did not notice you at all. Young fellows like you must not listen to talk of marriage;" this with his oily smile. "When you will be ripe enough I'll get you a nice girl with a big dowry."

With my heart throbbing painfully over what I had heard I went into the dining-room. There I

found Malke, pale and apprehensive, pretending to read a book. I thought I detected the signs of fresh tears on her cheeks.

In about an hour Mr. Takiff came into the room where we sat, smiling blissfully. "My daughter," he announced, "next Friday your intended one is going to stay Shabbos with us."

Malke did not utter a word, but her beautiful face changed colour, a few tears trickled down her cheeks, and the book in her hand slipped to the floor. "Oh, Israel, I am so unhappy—so unhappy!" she whispered; and without giving me a chance to reply she slipped away to her bedroom.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BRIDEGROOM

FRIDAY night arrived. Having spent all afternoon brooding in the forest, I had not seen the *Choson* (bridegroom), who had arrived a little before sunset and was now in the parlour chanting prayers with Mr. Takiff. I found the dining-room brightly illuminated, the finest cloth spread, and the best dishes arranged on the table, and Mrs. Takiff, in a new silk gown and a white apron, was reading from her prayer-book and frequently raising her eyes in the direction of Malke's room. She likewise had not seen the *Choson* and was nervously awaiting his appearance.

"Tell Malke to hurry with her toilet and come to the dining-room," said Mrs. Takiff to me as I came in.

I found Malke, who had remained in her room all day, lying on her bed with her head buried in the pillows. When I delivered my message she answered dully: "I'll come in soon."

In a few minutes she entered the room and sat down quietly, her face white and drawn. Her mother glanced at her pale face and quietly dropped her eyes upon the prayer-book before her. My

heart ached with love and sympathy for Malke. I wished to speak to her, but I dared not and could not.

We sat in an embarrassing silence till the door opened and Mr. Takiff ushered in a young man.

Heavens! Shmunke Menke Shmunke's stood before me in all his ugliness. His tall, lank figure, with his head drooped over his chest, looked like a faded sunflower bending the stalk of its weight. His stooping shoulders seemed to have become more rounded, and the corkscrew curls that hung over each ear had certainly lengthened. He wore a coat that almost swept the floor, and an octagonal-shaped hat with a long visor that overshadowed his greenish eyes.

"Gut Shabbos," he bashfully stammered.

Mr. Takiff turned to his wife. "Sarah, this is the bridegroom."

Malke's face changed from white to scarlet, then to white again. I had a great desire to knock down this invited idiot, though I could not clearly see how he was to blame. Neither Malke nor I was introduced to Shmunke. I managed to sit at one end of the table, and as his eyes rarely left his plate I escaped recognition.

During the meal Mr. Takiff tested the young man's sharpness in the Talmud. The host questioned and the bridegroom answered with wonderful quickness. Mr. Takiff's admiration was plainly read on his face; he was ecstatic over finding his

future son-in-law so well equipped for the battle-field of hair-splitting discussions. The *Choson* did not exchange a word with his *fiancée* that night; once I noticed him glance through the corner of his eye at the silent, trembling girl, but he bashfully dropped his eyes as soon as she looked up.

Depressed and miserable, I sneaked out of the room in order to avoid Shmunke. I spent all of the next day in the forest on the pretense of feeling ill. I hated the whole world—Mr. Takiff for bringing this Talmudic imbecile, Mrs. Takiff for not chasing Shmunke out of the house, and I almost hated even Malke because she kept silent.

The following evening the betrothal took place. Malke, sad and pale, did not utter a syllable or even show a smile during the ceremony. When broken clay pots and dishes came rattling down in a shower, celebrating the solemn event in accordance with the traditional Jewish custom, she stared blankly in front of her. I noticed her mother once turn aside and wipe her eyes. But Mr. Takiff was so lost in the Talmudic labyrinth and so elated in spirit that he paid little attention to his child and her sufferings.

The bridegroom did not exchange a word with his bride this night, either, but sat surrounded by a coterie of Talmudists, who were called together by Mr. Takiff to test the "Illui's" sharpness and knowledge. For an hour Shmunke swayed himself to and fro, while he explained in his nasal voice some

knotty point of Talmudic law. Half a dozen were quizzing him at once, and to all of them Shmunke replied with lightning rapidity.

“*Pish! pish! an Illui—ach, an Illui!*” the guests whispered to one another, and shrugged their shoulders in great admiration.

CHAPTER XXIV

FATHER AGAINST CHILD

THE days passed rapidly, bringing Malke nearer and nearer to the day set for her marriage. Her feelings for Shmunke were obvious to me, but she spoke very little to any one, and even with me she went no further than to say that she was very, very unhappy.

A few days before the Jewish New Year, while we were all loitering at the table after we had finished dinner, Mr. Takiff took notice of the silent dejection of his daughter. "What ails you, Malke?" he asked gravely. "You seem to forget that your *Choson* will be with us *Succoth* [the Feast of Booths], and that the wedding is not far off."

Malke, who had been sitting with her cheek in her hand, made no reply. She only bit her lip and tightened her mouth.

"Nosen! Nosen!" admonished his wife, who must have guessed how sore her daughter's feelings were.

"What a simpleton you are!" he said impatiently to his wife. "Can't you see Malke's indifference to her *Choson*, who is a real gem? Why do you look as if you had the nightmare?" he

demanding of Malke, irritated by her silent aversion to his choice.

Malke's lips tightened again, her chin trembled; then a flood of tears burst from her eyes. And tugging nervously at her jacket she faltered in a low tone: "I will not—marry—that—ugly—stupid—scarecrow!"

These words were like a spark in a heap of powder. "What!" he cried, jumping to his feet. "What! you don't want to marry this Illui, this great and wonderful genius! He stupid!" His voice rose to a shriek in his excitement. "Do you mean to instruct me to whom I shall marry you? Do you? Do you perhaps wish to marry a gentile—hey?"

"Nosen! Nosen!" implored Sarah.

Mr. Takiff did not heed his wife's appeal. "Whom do you wish to marry, outcast? Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed bitterly. "She don't want the Illui whom Rabbi Brill consults in rendering decisions. Who ever heard of a Jewish girl objecting to her father's choice? Mercy! what are we coming to? You perhaps would like to have one," he continued sarcastically, and his whole frame quivered with anger, "who writes, and smokes a cigar on Shabbos, and who rides on horseback on the holy rest-day—such a one my *tznuah* [virtuous one] wishes to marry. Heavens! Would that my ears were deaf to such open blasphemy from the mouth of my own flesh and blood. The Illui or the grave!" As he shouted this last he brought his fist down

upon the table with such force that the dishes danced.

“Nosen ! Nosen !” cried his wife again, rising and taking his arm.

But he threw off her hand and paced up and down the floor, gazing wrathfully at Malke, who sat weeping with her head upon the table. Then he remained standing in the middle of the room for a minute or two with both hands at his temples, as if a dreadful thought had flashed through his brain, and suddenly rushed out of the room and slammed the door after him.

CHAPTER XXV

"YOM KIPPUR"

THE family storm abated after this fierce outburst. Mr. Takiff, who was a very devoted father, had simply lost control of himself for the instant. He was now all kindness. Of course, it never for an instant occurred to him to yield to Malke's desire; but he began to try to reconcile her to the coming marriage by reciting the great virtues and ability of her *Choson* and by drawing pictures of the happiness and the honour that the Illui would bring her. Malke scarcely replied to his persuasions—a silence which the father mistook for tacit acquiescence.

We had planned to spend the Day of Atonement in Gonsmar, a town seven versts distant, where the family always went to worship, as there was no synagogue in Dubrovka. On the morning before the Day of Atonement, Mr. Takiff, Mrs. Takiff, and even little Jacob rose early, beaming with happiness; for just as the following day is devoted to earnest prayer and self-denial, this day is one of festivity and rejoicing. It is incumbent upon every God-fearing Israelite to feast and thank the Great Creator a hundred and one times. And

in order to fulfill this commandment, Mr. Takiff took a bite of various kinds of fruit and offered a blessing each time.

Despite the general happiness, Malke looked so sad and ill that her mother suggested it would be wise for her to stay at home if she would not feel lonesome. Malke expressed her preference to remain, and it was so settled.

At dinner we dipped our bread in honey—this being a symbolic prayer that the coming year may be as sweet as the bread we ate. After dinner we prepared to start for Gonsmar. Mr. Takiff, who made a grand appearance in his long, black holiday coat, called together his servants and gave them orders not to sell or execute any transaction the next day. Suddenly Mrs. Takiff began to weep, crying that she feared to leave Malke behind. But her husband laughed at her forebodings, and said if Malke wished to remain at home she might remain. Malke threw her arms about her mother and kissed her again and again, and embraced and kissed her father, her warm tears trickling down his white beard. He kissed her and blessed her in the old Hebrew fashion. She did not speak a word, but I could see that her tears almost stifled her.

“I shall pray for you to-morrow,” her father said, as he stood upon the threshold of the house, “and you should also pray for us.”

Malke wiped her eyes, but did not venture upon

an answer. After we had left the house Sarah went back to kiss her once more.

As we rolled away in the carriage I glanced back at Malke. My heart almost broke at sight of her, standing on the porch, her hands clasped before her, her face streaming with tears. Another instant, and the thick forest had shut her from my view. But the picture of her weeping in the doorway, with interlocked hands, was still vivid before me—as it is even now whenever I think of her.

On arriving at Gonsmar we left our carriage at an inn and at once repaired to the synagogue. The yard about the house of worship was crowded with people. Immediately before the entrance of the synagogue there stood a long table on which plates were placed marked "Hospital," "Orphan Asylum," "Hakhnoses-Kalo" (to bring poor maidens into wedlock), and with the names of the various other charities of the community. Before each plate sat some prominent member of the congregation.

Mr. Takiff stopped before the long table, bade them all "Gut Yomtov," and dropped five rubles in one plate, ten in another, three in another, until he had contributed to every one of them.

The passage from the table to the door was blocked by scores of wretched cripples, orphans, and widows, who begged in most pitiful tones. As every well-to-do man entered the synagogue yard he was surrounded by these poor creatures,

who perhaps had been waiting all the year for this charitable season, and who implored, in the name of their hungry wives, mothers, and children, that they be helped with a few copecks.

The experience of all was our experience. Dozens of hands were stretched out for alms as we came up to the synagogue door. "May you live a thousand years, good Jew! Have pity on a poor cripple," jumped up one with a wooden leg. "Oh, eternal health to you and your wife and your children, Mr. Takiff. Give something to a poor widow with nine children," a haggard woman pulled Mr. Takiff by his sleeve. "May you live to see great-great-grandchildren; have mercy on a poor orphan who has a mother lying sick in bed," pleaded a ragged boy. "Oh, pray, give me something. Good life and health to you! I have eleven children, and my husband lies sick in bed with a broken leg," entreated a woman with a babe at her breast. In response to all these pleas, Mr. Takiff drew a bagful of silver coins from under his long coat and distributed its contents to the miserable alms-seekers. That done, we entered the synagogue.

The large building was filled to its very doors with pious worshipers, some of whom read from books and cried softly; others shook their bodies violently and shouted in most agonising despair; and still others wept and moaned and beat their breasts as if they meant to strike them through and through. They were all robed in white shrouds,

over which were thrown loosely white and black praying-shawls. Hundreds of wax candles, stuck in a large box of sand, burned before the altar, and hundreds of them flickered in the deep recesses of the windows.

Some belated people with penitent faces were pulling off their boots and unfolding their shrouds; many remained at the door shaking hands and asking forgiveness of one another, and with tears in their eyes expressing regret for the past; here and there others happily extended wishes of a "good seal" to their neighbours. For on the Day of Atonement all must be friends. "Sins between man and his Maker are forgiven on Yom Kippur," laid down the Talmudic sages, "but sins of one man against another are not atoned for until the wrong-doer asks forgiveness from the person wronged."

The T'philo Zako (the Pure Prayer) had already begun when we arrived. I also opened a prayer-book and murmured the Pure Prayer, but my mind travelled back to Malke with her bowed head and clasped hands.

A resounding clap on the big hollow table at the altar suddenly silenced all noises. Only the irrepressible sob of a bitter heart or the broken weeping of women from the gallery disturbed the quietude. All rose with faces uplifted. The silence grew deeper; nothing but the soft tread of shoeless feet was heard; these were the footsteps

of the seven white-bearded elders of the congregation. The snow-white curtain overhanging the Oren-Kodesh was drawn aside; the portals were opened. At sight of this there came a look of awe in every countenance. Each of the elders took out a scroll of the Torah, kissed it, and holding it to his breast marched to the altar, where the seven formed a ring. Breathing almost stopped—it was a moment too reverential for tears, too solemn for prayer.

The choir waited for the sexton's signal; the sexton waited for a motion from the rabbi. At length the signal came. The leader of the choir gave a faint cough to clear his throat, and in a tremulous minor key began the quaint, traditional, melodious Kol-Nidro. The voices of the choir rose and fell, swelled and narrowed, all in the saddest of tones, and the congregation groaned and moaned and wept. The hymn was repeated three times, and after each time an amen was intoned that sounded like the sudden bursting of a dam.

Unconsciously tears gathered in my eyes. I bowed my head, and there came upon me a burning realisation of the meaning of this period of self-denial—this day which has been eternised in Jewish memory by fire and blood; the day which cost the downtrodden Israelite the lives of his innocent babes and guiltless sons and daughters; the day on which the eternal wanderer recalls with horror the sufferings of his people in the time of the Crusaders;

the day on which the persecuted Ghetto Jew is reminded that for maintaining an ideal and belief he is penned up in filthy quarters, and his life and soul are crushed out from him; the day on which the scapegoat prays for less cruelty and barbarism in the new year from the hands of the preachers of Peace and Love and Charity—the Day of Atonement! That day gives the unhappy race strength and forbearance to endure the blows and derision from their neighbours who smite the right cheek, then the left. That day has made the Jews a race of martyrs.

At the close of the service I went to the inn. Mr. Takiff and many of the congregation remained in the synagogue all night, reciting prayers and chanting hymns. When I returned the next morning they were still praying and crying and beating their breasts. The reeky smell of socks mingled with the foul odour of hundreds of smoking tallow and wax candles. Mr. Takiff's candle, which stood in the recess of the window nearest him, was already extinguished, and a long piece of burned wick fell over one side, where the wax had melted away. He regarded this as a bad omen and was perturbed. Mrs. Takiff extended her head from the women's gallery and gazed at the extinguished candle with a frightened expression on her face.

The day slowly advanced. The effect of the fast was impressed upon every face. Only the little boys who had not reached the fasting age

looked happy, munching legs and gizzards of chicken and making guesses and bets as to what candles would burn out the soonest. The boys who had just reached the fasting age of thirteen sat exhausted in the hay that littered the floor. Their faces were haggard, without a shade of the colour of life in them; their eyes opened and closed wearily; and the "smelling-vials" went up to their noses automatically.

Happily *Neilla* (the last prayer at sunset) came. It is the holy of holies. It is the last chance, so to speak, to invoke the King of Kings to "impress a good seal upon the decrees." Tired out as the worshipers were by this time, they girded their loins to make the last appeal. The doors of the ark were opened by one who had paid dear for the honour. The congregation stood up with evident fear, and remained on their feet during this service, which lasted over an hour. Like warriors fighting the last battle, they prayed and wept and struck their breasts with their last bit of energy.

From the women's gallery came a wailing and sobbing that encouraged the men to augment their own. The hour was sacred, fearful, awe-inspiring.

Finally *Neilla* was over. The last amen resounded in the dusky synagogue like a deep sigh of relief. There was hope in every countenance. A faint smile—the smile of victory—bright-

ened many faces at the forcible slap of the sexton's hand upon the table.

"Next year in Jerusalem!" proclaimed the whole congregation in one uproarious voice; then came seven times "God is our Lord" in a triumphant shout; and then came the *finale*—the long-drawn call of the ram's horn.

CHAPTER XXVI

A TRAGEDY WITHOUT BLOODSHED

WE found a carriage waiting, and without stopping to break the fast in town we started for home. The coachman cracked his whip fiercely and set the horses at full speed. Mrs. Takiff was anxious about her daughter, and asked the driver, who had been in the innkeeper's house for fifteen years, how he had left Malke. "All right," he muttered; and he snapped his whip viciously at the horses' ears and cursed them for their slowness. I wondered at this, for I knew Nikolai loved the horses better than his wife. Even when the horses were galloping at breakneck speed Nikolai did not stop his curses.

"You're in a bad humour to-night, Nikolai," Mr. Takiff reproved the coachman; but the latter paid no attention to his master and emptied another volley of curses.

After an hour of this rapid pace we drew up before the long house. No light was seen through the windows, and Malke was not on the porch to meet us. The driver jumped off quickly, opened the gate, and drove into the yard. Not even a

servant came to receive us. We entered the large dining-room. Still not a soul appeared.

"Where is Malke? Where is everybody?" shouted Mr. Takiff.

Tekla, the muzhik maid-servant, and Andrew, who took care of the cattle, entered with hanging heads.

"Where is Malke? Where is my daughter?" Nosen demanded in a threatening voice.

They did not answer, but stood with eyes down-cast, alternately wringing their hands and making the sign of the cross.

"Muzhik, swine, you dogs' hides, robbers, where's my daughter?" burst out the desperate father wildly. "Give me my daughter!" He caught Andrew by the hair and shook him, during which jerking the muzhik frantically crossed his breast.

"*Panotchic Moi* [my little master]," faltered the peasant, "you know Count Losjinski——"

"You horse's head," his master interrupted him, stamping his feet madly, "where is my Malke? I don't care about the Count, you pig's snout!"

"Pan Notka [Master Nosen]," the servant began again, "the Count was here this morning and stayed here several hours, and I saw him walking away with Malke."

"Confound you, pig's snout! Did you see my daughter going away with the Count?"

"No, Pan Notka, but——"

The master lost control of himself and shook the

muzhik by his ears. "Where is my daughter? Tell me quick or——"

His excitement was so intense and his anger so fierce that he could not finish the sentence. His wife dropped upon a sofa and sobbed. Little Yankele (Jacob), frightened by the frenzy of his father and the grief of his mother, broke into wails. I stood in the middle of the room, stiff and cold.

"I saw Pane Malke walking toward the forest about half an hour after the Count had left," stammered the trembling Andrew.

"Harness the two best horses in the light vehicle, Nikolai," shouted the master. "Israel and I will look in the woods."

I realised the folly of searching in the woods for Malke, for I divined the cause of her disappearance. But I made no objection, and accompanied the agitated father to the forest. The horses galloped as fast as they could; Nikolai, at the command of his master, whipped them mercilessly. On the way Mr. Takiff did not utter a word, only pressed his temples with his hands and groaned.

When we reached the path that cut through the forest Mr. Takiff alighted and asked me to walk with him through the thick woods. We tramped over stumps and fallen trees and through the thick underbrush. Everything was quiet except the autumn wind that whistled painfully and the sound of our footsteps.

"Malke! Malke!" shouted the unhappy father distractedly.

Nothing but a hollow echo came in response. Once there was a noise which sounded like the cracking of dry twigs under foot. We stopped and listened with held breath. But it was only the hissing of the wind.

At the other end of the woods Nikolai was waiting for us with a carriage. "To Count Losjinski," ordered the master as we stepped into the vehicle.

In about an hour we reached the Count's palace. No light was to be seen at any of the windows. Mr. Takiff pulled the bell fiercely. No one came to the door. He rang again impatiently, and again and again, but he only got the same silent answer that he received when he called for his daughter in the heart of the forest.

We remained standing on the steps of the palace while minute after minute passed, Mr. Takiff with his head hanging over his chest.

Presently we started home; there was nothing else for us to do. On our way we accosted every peasant we met with questions, but learned nothing. At length we came to a small inn kept by a Jew, and here we stopped in the hope of obtaining some clue.

We found a shrivelled, black-haired, black-eyed little man seated at a table, with his wife and three little children by his side, eating their first meal

after the long fast. A few muzhiks sat at another table in the same room, smoking their stinking Makhorka (a poor quality of tobacco) and washing their throats with delicious vodka.

"How do you do, Pan Notka?" said one of the muzhiks, with long, flaxen hair, a sharp little nose, and small, shiny eyes peeping from under a narrow, projecting forehead. "You're highly promoted, Pan Notka," he went on jestingly, before any one else could speak. "I saw your Malke driving with the Count in a carriage to-day," and he winked at his companions.

Mr. Takiff fell back and stood quivering for a minute. Then he partially controlled himself, and besought the peasant to tell him all he knew about his daughter. "Pray, Danila, where have you seen my daughter with the Count? Have mercy on an old father," the old man implored, with tears rolling down his soft, white face.

Sympathy for his grief could be read in every countenance; even Danila appeared more earnest at these words.

"Well, Pan Notka, I'll tell you all I know," said the peasant, putting his pipe aside. "You know, my oat-field lies right by the forest, and you know, Pan Notka, this year we had a poor harvest. At first there was no rain at all, then there was too much rain. You remember the hail that broke the window-panes of your hothouse? So my oat-field in the skirts of the Count's forest was very poor,

and I could not gather my oats until last week. This morning, Pan Notka, I went to gather the last few sheaves I had there, when, about two o'clock in the afternoon, I noticed the Count Losjinski with your daughter coming toward my field. And the Count was very good and kind to-day. He asked me about my harvest and about the vegetables. Coming home I told my wife there must be something wrong with the Count, to talk to me as if he were one of our set. First the Count waited in the forest, walking up and down and whistling, then I saw your daughter coming. She was wrapped in a large black shawl and carried a reticule. I wondered at first where she was going on the greatest of your holidays, but I said nothing, because the Count ran to receive her and embraced and kissed her. I wondered and wondered, but I could not understand it. Then the Count whistled very loud, and his carriage came from the woods. They got in and drove off as quick as the devil. In fact, I couldn't believe my own eyes, and so I told my wife, but, says I to myself: 'Don't I know Malke, Pan Notka's daughter?' My wife laughed right out in my face, and said the devil must have played a nice trick on me, and I thought my Marianna was right, and it must have been some ghost or devil, or the evil spirits know what."

This story the peasant told in the usual digressive peasant's style, and finished by spitting on the floor unsparingly before returning to his pipe. The

little innkeeper and his bewigged wife shook their heads and moaned: "Woe is to us! woe is to us!" But Mr. Takiff said nothing; he stood dumb, staring idiotically. And we immediately left the inn.

About an hour later we arrived at home. We found Mrs. Takiff lying in bed, and an old peasant woman, who was the physician of the village, attending her. Little Yankele was sleeping in his clothes, crouched on two chairs in the dining-room.

Mrs. Takiff pointed to the open letter that lay on the table. It ran thus:

"My Beloved Father and Mother: I go with the Count. I realise the pain and shame I am causing you. I know you will never forgive me—it is useless to justify myself to you. The thought that I shall never see you again makes me dizzy. How my blood is boiling! But I could not help myself. I love Count Losjinski; the thought of him fills me with life and love. Can I resist when a greater force, which governs you and me and every one else, has taken possession of me? Do you remember, father, you used to tell me that whatever one does it is the will of God? If this is true, then it is not my wrong, but His, who made me love the Count. If you cannot forgive, forget not your ever-loving
"MALKE."

The aggrieved father scanned the letter with a wild stare in his eyes. He remained speechless for a moment. Then, as if awakened from a delirium, he rose to his feet, got a knife, and with a nodding

head and tears flowing over his face came up to his wife.

“Sarah, our daughter Malke is no more!” he said in a hoarse, tremulous voice. “Her chastity is gone! Our child is dead to us—dead! *Krea* [rend your clothes].”

And as he said this he made a cut in his wife’s jacket, then in the lapel of his own coat, and sat down on the floor heavily.

“Malke is dead—dead!” he groaned through his streaming tears as he swayed his body mournfully.

“Oh, my child! Oh, Malke! Malke!” wept Mrs. Takiff bitterly, wringing her hands.

BOOK THE SECOND
LIGHT

“The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light.”

—ISAIAH.

CHAPTER I

"LITHUANIAN JERUSALEM"

THE holidays passed mournfully enough. Nothing was heard of Malke. Her name was not to be mentioned in her father's presence, though both of the grief-stricken parents continued to weep and groan, and the dreary fall added a touch of gloom. I could not bear to stay in this house any longer, so when the first snow fell I thanked the broken-hearted people for their kindness and departed. With a hundred rubles in my pocket I hoped to be able to make a start in Vilno.

Late on Friday afternoon I arrived in the great city of enlightenment. The streets of "Lithuanian Jerusalem," as Vilno was justly termed, were thronged with running, jostling, pushing men and women, whose every look and gesture spoke of thrifty commerce. With no particular destination in view, I wandered through the busy thoroughfares, staring at everything about me with astonishment: at the three- and four-story white-plastered buildings which seemed to me like so many towers of Babel, at the crowded sidewalks, at the noisy pavements, at the smoothly rolling carriages, at the rattling carts, at the rushing droshkys. Everything

was so different from what I had been accustomed to in the small, dirty towns that I felt helpless, half-frightened.

I reached the market-place. Here more than ever I was aware that I was in Vilno and on Friday—the busiest day of all seven. I paused on a street corner and looked about dazedly. Fishmongers, fruit-venders, small dry-goods dealers called off their wares in stentorian voices, asthmatic voices, screechy, piping voices, jarring voices, and in all sorts of intonations and dialects.

A heavy-cloaked, fat Jewess, with a large woollen shawl twisted around her head and covering all features but her frozen nose and moving lips, solicited trade in this wise: “Blessed women, come, come; good hot, mellow, and relishable beans; buy, women, for the Sabbath. They will melt in your mouths like granulated sugar—so may the One whose name I am not worthy of mentioning help me to see my children under the bridal canopy—a real bargain; a bargain as sure as I live.” “A bargain as sure as I live,” piped her little daughter, while her mother was rubbing her hands and warming herself over the “fire-pot.”

Another woman stood in the doorway of a dry-goods shop, her hands under her apron and her head cowed in a heavy shawl, quarrelling with a woman who was leaving the store. “Outcast! vixen! may your name be effaced from the earth!” cursed the storekeeper. “Don’t I know that you

go around from store to store only to bargain and haggle without buying a penny's worth of stuff? Ha! ha! ha! Did you ever see such a pig, such an unclean animal, who came over there from some small town or village, and simply goes around for the fun of bargaining? Ten customers—so may God help me and give me good luck!—ten customers—so may I see my eldest daughter under the bridal canopy and you in the grave!—ten customers—so may ten plagues set on your hoggish black face!—ten customers passed my door and did not come in because you were bargaining with me, and they surely would have bought more goods than you have got in your store, you pig of a small town! All the ten plagues of Egypt shall rest on your hoggish head!" The shopkeeper turned to the passersby: "Nu! nu! Did you ever hear? She don't want my goods, she says, after I had turned the store upside down and quoted her the cheapest prices—almost at cost."

The would-be customer, a short, heavy-set woman with purple cheeks, blue lips, and a reddish snub-nose, had been gathering wrath, and she now turned it loose. "Thief! Pickpocket! Your swindles are known all over the world, 'from India unto Ethiopia.' Ha! ha! ha! She thinks she has got hold of a fool from a small town, and tries to sell her a 'cat in a bag.' Before I ever knew about your threadbare stolen handkerchiefs and rotten silk I had already dealt in ten thousand rubles' worth of satin and costly

silks and velvets. All the storekeepers of our town warned me not to buy any goods from you—so may I live to see my husband and children in the best of health when I arrive home! All your curses will fall in the deep sea where the Egyptians were drowned, and where I hope to see you swallowed. Must I buy your rotten goods? Get yourself a bigger fool than me. No, no, little sister”—this in a tone of mockery—“you can’t sell me your stinking goods. I was not born yesterday.”

“Fish—trembling, live fish, just from the bait, as good as the leviathan,” struck in a fishmonger, winking significantly at the two quarrelling women. “The Czar himself may eat them. Try them, buy them, good women. Eight copecks a pound—eight copecks. Fresh and trembling, good women.”

Bewildered by the tumult and confusion, I strolled from stall to stall, staring about me in countryman fashion. I paid dear for my curiosity. Every time I raised my eyes to the high buildings some urchin was certain to aim a painful blow under my chin. Once the blow was so powerful that when I recovered from my surprise I found my image deeply imprinted in a heap of snow.

At length the yellowish street lights began to flicker. I had never before seen such illuminations, and they filled my mind with admiration for the magnificence of the Lithuanian metropolis.

While engrossed in sight-seeing, I was utterly unconscious of the biting frost and the dust-like

sprinkling of snow in the air; but now that my curiosity was half-satisfied and night had fallen I began to feel the cold and think of a place to spend the night. I had money in my pocket and might easily have found lodging, but I was so at a loss in this big city that I actually feared to try. At one tavern after another I stopped, but could not summon courage enough to open the door. I might have walked the streets all night had I not soon observed that on every corner policemen were eying me, made suspicious by my having so often passed and repassed them. As my fear of them was greater than my fear of innkeepers, I determined to seek refuge in the first lodging-house I should come across.

I pushed open the door of an ale-house and, half-embarrassed, remained standing like a beggar on the very threshold. Two men seated at a little table were talking in low tones, and at first seemed not to observe my presence. A minute later, however, one of the men looked up at me angrily and said to his companion: "The beggars are eating the flesh off our bones. They give us no rest even on Friday night." Then he asked sarcastically of me: "How many suppers have you had to-night?"

I was humiliated. I fingered the money in my pocket, with a strong desire to pull out the roll of bills and show him that I had more than enough to pay for a meal.

“He’s not that kind of a bird,” the other remarked, rising from his seat.

“What do you wish?” demanded the first man, who was the proprietor.

In a faltering voice I told him that I was a stranger seeking lodging for the night, for which I was ready to pay in advance. My explanation seemed to appease the angry proprietor, and coming near me he asked: “What is your business, young man?”

I could not understand what right he had to put this question to me, but as I lacked courage to refuse an answer I told him I had come to attend the gymnasium.

“Talmudic sucklings are flocking in daily, so that the Yeshivas will soon have to be closed for want of students,” he said to his companion. Then turning to me he said in a tone of dismissal: “This is no lodging-house, young man.”

I was about to leave, when his companion, who had been scrutinising me silently, inquired: “Have you any friends here?”

“I don’t know a soul in the city,” I answered.

He continued to look sharply at me, and after a moment’s hesitation asked: “Do you write a neat hand—I mean Russian?”

“I think I do.”

“If you are willing to do some copying—for an hour or two a day—I will give you lodging by way

of compensation and give you an opportunity to earn a few rubles besides."

This was indeed a godsend. I accepted the offer straightway.

A few minutes later we were walking through the streets, while my companion was questioning me about my past. He was tall and solidly built, with jet-black curly hair, and with, what I thought, mischievous-looking eyes. At first I was apprehensive of danger; but there were candour and sympathy in his words, and his offer was too inviting for one in my circumstances to reject, so I soon dismissed all suspicion from my mind.

We presently entered a large, gloomy courtyard,

After we had climbed two narrow stairways my new friend rapped on a door. We were admitted by a young woman into a dimly lighted apartment. He introduced the woman as "the lady who keeps house for me," and he showed me into a neat-looking room which contained, besides a bed and a little table, a small printing-press.

"Israel—don't mind my calling you by your first name; I also wish you to call me Adolph, not Mr. Dolgoff," he laughed merrily, and slapped me on the shoulder by way of encouraging good fellowship—"Israel, make yourself at home here. I hope you will not find me a bad fellow. But I must add one stipulation—whatever you see or hear keep to yourself; ask no questions. When you have had as much experience as I you will find

this advice very helpful to you. Children must be taught to talk, grown people to keep silent."

After I had supped on very palatable food I went to bed. But although I was worn out, hours passed before I fell asleep. The incident of my meeting Dolgoff and the scenes I had witnessed during the day kept me awake. My new friend looked mysterious; everything about him was suggestive of a secret; and yet his cordial manners won my confidence. One hour in his company had made me feel as if we had been lifelong friends. But what did it matter as long as I was in Vilno—in Lithuanian Jerusalem—in the great city of light and culture? Finally magic hope sung a sweet lullaby and lulled me to sleep.

CHAPTER II

MY SECOND BIRTH

AFTER a long rest I awoke the next morning with a happy word on my lips—Vilno. I lay in bed listening to the rumbling of wheels on the loud cobble-stones as if it were sweet music, and later, glancing through my window at the tier upon tier of high buildings and domes and spires, I pictured myself as Napoleon beholding the burnished roofs and magnificent structures of Moscow before its doom.

My joy was so overwhelming for many days to come that all past recollections escaped my memory; even the fresh remembrance of Malke was merely like the sour taste that remains after eating sweets. I thought of nothing but the future. Nor was I troubled by the suspicion that Dolgoff had at first aroused in my mind. I did my clerical work as he bade me, asking no questions. Not infrequently I wondered what he did with so many passports, which I copied, and what he did with that printing-press, which I often heard him work behind closed doors, but I would instantly recall his stipulation and remain dumb. Did I have any cause to disregard his orders? Did he not treat me

generously? Did he not furnish me with books that I might pursue my studies? Did he not help me in every possible way? With such questions I would quiet any misgivings that arose in my mind. And what a companion! His rich, elastic barytone, which rang with tragic sweetness and pathos on many a frosty winter night, still chimes in my ears like a weird echo whenever my mind recurs to that period of my eventful life.

Two months passed happily in routine work and study. One night about Christmas time, while I sat reading, I heard Dolgoff and another man talking in the adjoining room. That there was a man in his room was itself surprising, as Dolgoff had few visitors, but my attention was attracted not so much by the visitor as by something suggestive in the voice of the guest.

"S-h! I hear somebody stirring in the next room," I heard the visitor say.

"This is the fellow I told you about—silent as a fish."

A short pause.

"How soon must you have the passports and the circulars?"

There was a sound like that of unfolding a large sheet of paper. "To-morrow morning, if possible," the stranger answered. "There is danger if they don't get the passports in three days."

"I am afraid to work at night. The press makes too much noise, and my housekeeper tells

me that the neighbours are getting suspicious of us."

"How about getting the fellow to work to-morrow all day?"

Another pause.

"I am afraid to trust him. He appeared dull at first, but I find him quite shrewd."

"Suppose you call him out so I can size him up."

Dolgoft called: "Israel!"

I pretended not to hear.

He called a second time.

I stepped into the next room. It was dim, and I could not see Dolgoft's companion very distinctly, but I noticed that he wore a gymnasium uniform.

"Is that you?" the stranger exclaimed.

I shrank back a step and said laughingly: "The voice is Jacob's voice and the hands are the hands of Esau."

"Don't you know me?" he asked, again coming closer to me.

Ephraim! But what a change! A heavy crop of dark, curly hair crowned his well-formed head, a brown mustache shaded his upper lip, and his keen eyes sparkled through a pair of glasses. He was more erect, more graceful than ever, and in the smart gymnasium uniform he looked quite distinguished.

Then we forgot everything else and talked of days gone by and of what had happened to us since our separation.

"I am in the seventh," he answered to my question as to his class.

"And I am in minus one," I said jocosely, though a trifle jealously.

"You will catch up with the rest of us," Ephraim assured me encouragingly. "Once rid of the fanatics, the rest is easy sailing. '*In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister*,'" he quoted Goethe. "The danger is now over: one daring step brings the advance of two."

Although I rejoiced at meeting my old friend, yet I dreaded his association. I realised that Ephraim's motives and ideas had always been worthy, but at the same time I feared he was instinctively creating trouble for himself and his companions. I did not clearly understand in what complication he was now involved, but the passports of his and Dolgoff's fabrication, as well as the circulars printed behind closed doors, were doubtless not serving a legitimate purpose. However, my situation was such as did not warrant my severing connections with either him or Dolgoff. And, besides, in spite of Ephraim's revolutionary ideas, which were not in harmony with my nature, I loved him for his sincerity. I have always preferred erring sincerity to truth advocated by a hypocrite.

The following day he took me to his lodging, where we discussed my future. There would be no trouble in my being admitted to the sixth, he assured me, if I should study all winter and the coming

summer; but I had no passport, without which, he said, I could not even present myself for examination. After a few minutes' thought he asked: "Would you mind changing your name?"

I did not divine his meaning at first and looked at him somewhat dubiously.

"Why, don't you understand?" He lowered his voice. "I can get you a passport under a different name, provided you would assume that name. Every three years you may renew the passport and live undisturbed all your life."

I felt that it would not be easy to part with my name; it seemed to me like changing my nose without remodelling my other features. But after he had laid the proposition before me and explained the impossibility of my accomplishing anything without such a step, I submitted to this change.

So that very afternoon, in the presence of Dolgoff, Ephraim presented me with a document that bore the Russian eagle and smilingly said: "I'll be your godfather and christen you Ivan Petrowitch Russakoff, a native of Pskoff. Remember, you are a native of Pskoff," he repeated warningly. "And now you are safe."

That night I lay awake for hours. Hitherto, though I had worked with enthusiasm, I had been in much the situation of one who is trying to find his way alone through a wilderness. Ephraim had pointed the direct path to me; his advice helped me to reduce my desultory plan of study to order. My

hopes grew stronger as I tossed about on my bed. I began to look into the future. I saw myself in gymnasium uniform; I saw myself studying arduously to win prizes; I saw myself in the midst of a graduating class and heard distinctly, "Gold medal for Ivan Petrowitch Russakoff"—and then, ghost-like, a picture began to take hazy shape. Gradually the figure assumed more definite outlines. My heart began to throb faster and the blood in my veins run more swiftly as the picture became clear before my eyes. I held my breath. A blooming maiden, with rich brown hair hanging down her back, stood by my side, smiling. I thought I heard her murmur very softly: "You foolish Israel! Why, then I'll marry you."

CHAPTER III

A ROSE WITH A THORN

DURING the winter and the following summer my studies were a passion with me. My eagerness for study and my inexhaustible craving for books kept me so spellbound that the nights for sleep appeared to me like black spokes in a fast-whirling wheel. I was instinctively an idler, and day-dreams were as natural to me as breathing. I forced myself to read and study assiduously all day and night. My friends urged me to study less and give more time to recreation. But how could I? I realised there was so much to learn, so much to observe, so much to think about, and that I was so ignorant and life was so short. And when I did permit myself a little respite in dusky twilight; when I figured it was cheaper to rest than to burn oil or candles, which I could ill afford, my mind would immediately turn to literature. I would revel in memories of the works of Shakespeare and Milton and Dante and Goethe and Schiller and Lessing and Heine and Rousseau and Molière and Cervantes. I was inspired by their grandeur—and at the same time I was humbled. To be called a student without possessing a thorough knowledge of literature,

philosophy, and all the sciences seemed to me unpardonable pedantry. Such thoughts, immediately followed by a realisation of my own insignificance and ignorance, often drove me to despair; and I would quickly make a light (not minding the cost, which frequently deprived me of a few meals at the end of the month) and proceed with my studies more arduously than ever. To say that I devoured all the books I could get hold of is scarcely a figure of speech. Finding myself in a library before many tiers of books, my brain would become dizzy from a nervous desire to read all the books at once.

In spite of Dolgoff's congeniality and kindness, I soon determined that his house was no place for me. I dreaded people with secrets. So as soon as I found employment by which I could earn enough for bread, butter, and tea, I moved to a small attic, from which I looked down upon a wide expanse of roofs. Small as my room was, I enjoyed it more than if it had been a sumptuously furnished palace. I loved the noiseless hum of silence at night, and there in my forsaken nook, with but a cot, a chair, and a table, I found these comforts in all their lavishness.

Of Ephraim I saw little, and at Dolgoff's apartment I called rarely. The former was too much engrossed in his ideas and propaganda, and the latter was busy fabricating passports and printing circulars, which he took pains to keep away from me. Besides, I had made up my mind that the

secret bond between the two was such as would not admit of investigation. From remarks dropped now and then I learned that they belonged to a revolutionary society, which I had no desire to join.

At the end of the summer I was admitted to the sixth grade of gymnasium, as Ephraim had predicted. My answers to the examination questions drew attention to me. I overheard one of the examiners remark to another: "A bright Jewish lad." And the record I made at examination I kept up in the class-rooms. I was constantly being commended by my instructors.

But there is no sunshine without shadow, no rose without a thorn. A very sensitive person can never be happy; his feelings are so tender that the least unkindness puts him in misery. Happiness is the lot only of those whose nerves are dull, whose brains are heavy, whose eyes look and do not see. Unfortunately, I was very sensitive—quick to see, quick to comprehend, quick to feel.

And it was not long before I felt the prick of the thorn. My assiduous study and native aptness for literature brought me to the head of the class in that course. The jealousy of the gentile boys was provoked, and I suffered. During recess, when the boys would play and fight, I could not pass through the school-yard without insult. One would gather the skirt of his coat in his hand in the shape of a pig's ear and imitate that unclean animal as

I passed; another would mimic my walk; some one else would bespatter me with ink blown through a straw. Nor were these the worst pranks they played upon me. Need I say that I suffered? The word suffer is not adequate to express what I felt. It was not their jibes and mockery alone that hurt me. I was hurt as much by their injustice to my race. It was not me individually that they insulted, but the great suffering people of Israel.

Many a night, when my tormentors were peacefully asleep, I lay in my dark little chamber and longed for the Ghetto and the Talmud. Several times I determined to give up all my hopes of becoming a distinguished man and go back to the Beth-Hamedresh and the musty folios of the Talmud. "Is not the confined Ghetto, with all its dirt and bigotry, the safest corner for the sensitive Jew?" I would ask myself. "There at least, though I suffered physically, I was not a target for sneering and jeering and unbearable offenses. There at least my heart and sentiments were not wounded. The swineherds who had beaten me were ignorant and were therefore not quite responsible for their inhuman act. But now, among educated people who are taught to reason and who boast of civilisation, why should I feel like a strayed lamb among a pack of wolves? What fault do they find with me that justifies their insults? What makes me an object of scorn? I do not ask of them to love me. Toleration is all I pray for."

But the next morning all my yearning for knowledge would come back to me, and I would go on with my studies with unabated zeal. Though it has never been in my nature to humble myself before any one, I learned after a while, in spite of my pride, to walk humbly before those brutal boys. I even used to correct some of the students' compositions before they had been handed to the teacher. And what recompense did I get for it? Smiling insults and tacit offenses.

After all, I derived a certain benefit from all these injuries. The misery I suffered through the prejudice of my tormentors strengthened my will; the sneers I received because I was of the fugitive race lent courage to my timorous nature. Suffering is the best cultivator of character. The wrongs others had done to me made me realise the wrong I was doing to others. Persecution taught me tolerance, sympathy, truthfulness, justice.

After a time I began to take thought as to what profession I should enter. I finally settled upon medicine, though I had no inclination for it. In Russia a Jew may not do what he wishes, but what he is permitted to do. I chose medicine because it was the most independent profession open to me.

During all the period of study and torture the image of Katia was constantly arising in my mind. Her sovereignty over me, which had lapsed during Malke's brief sway, was now more absolute, more absorbing; it thrilled me and added an ineffable

sweetness to my existence. I could not clearly see where or how I could ever meet her again, but I was young, and youth is ever hopeful. When my teacher pronounced my verses "decidedly promising" I regarded this success as a partial fulfilment of Katia's prediction that I would become a famous poet. Then would come the consuming ambition to realise her expectations, and I would study and write more zealously than ever that I might become as great as Nekrassoff or Lermontoff or Pushkin.

So several years passed—years of torment, of study, of versifying, of dreaming of Katia. On my graduation day I heard, as I once had dreamed: "A gold medal for Ivan Petrowitch Russakoff."

Ephraim had graduated the year before and had gone to Kieff to study in the university; and thither I also decided to go.

CHAPTER IV

"RUSSIAN JERUSALEM"

ONE chilly autumn morning I arrived in Kieff—the "City of Churches." Its numberless glittering spires, gilt cupolas, sparkling crosses, superb belfries, overtowering domes, and the splendour and holiness of its atmosphere filled me with overwhelming admiration. The sight of the picturesque Jerusalem of Russia, with its numberless monasteries, cathedrals, and churches, aroused in me new feelings, new thoughts, new hopes, new aspirations. My innate love for beauty in any form stirred my enthusiasm to wonderment, admiration, worship.

I found Ephraim easily enough, and through him I found Dolgoff. The former was pursuing his studies and no less ardently his propaganda, and the latter, by some means or other, managed, without doing a stroke of work, to wear good clothes and eat the choicest of food.

Dolgoff started on seeing me the first time. "By thunder!" he cried, "with that sprouting mustache on your face and appealing look you're enough like an old friend of mine to be his brother [this mustache was a product of my last year in Vilno]. And by the bye, one of his names

—he had a dozen [this with a rolling laugh]—was the same as yours, Abramowitch.”

I thought of Joseph—in my turn I was startled. My heart beat wildly. This (if this friend of Dolgoff’s should prove my brother) was the first I had heard of Joseph since I was a child; and, in fact, I had scarcely ever thought of him.

“What was the brother of mine like?” I asked, controlling myself and attempting to laugh.

“Don’t call him your brother, even in jest,” returned Dolgoff. “You look a little alike—only in physical appearance. He is one of the biggest rogues the devil ever got into.”

“He sounds interesting. You might at least tell me a little about him,” I said, with a fast-beating heart, again straining a light manner.

“He certainly was a lost soul,” said Dolgoff carelessly. “I heard it whispered that he killed his own father. Whether this was true I can’t say. But I know he collected a lot of blackmail from an important personage who was mixed up in a murder, by threatening exposure. I got to know him pretty well, for we worked together for a while—passports, you know. When I first knew him he was living with a woman, a gentile, who said she was his wife. But they weren’t married. He had talked free-love hocus-pocus to her till he had convinced her marriage wasn’t necessary. He soon deserted her and ran off with a money-lender’s daughter and all of his money he could

get hold off. I haven't heard of him since, but he's undoubtedly at the same game. If I were you, Israel," he ended humorously, with a soft, rolling laugh, "I'd shave off my mustache and look like some one else."

I did not dare question him any further about Joseph, for fear my curiosity, together with the resemblance he had noted, might lead him to suspect the relationship between his old friend and me. Needless to say, I was not proud of Joseph. So I turned the conversation upon Ephraim.

"Oh, Razovski is now stirring Kieff with 'liberty for the Jews' and 'assimilation,'" he said in answer to my question as to what was Ephraim's present hobby. "He is always fortunate in finding co-operators. A certain Judge Bialnick—a gentile—is working indefatigably for the cause."

"Judge Bialnick!" I uttered breathlessly.

"Why, did you ever hear of him? He comes from Lithuania and has spent his life among Jews."

I did not answer his question; instead, I again changed the subject. "And what about Nihilism?"

"It is not dead yet," he responded in a whisper. "That's how Razovski came to meet Judge Bialnick. The Judge is at the head of our secret society here. Matters will become lively pretty soon." He suddenly checked himself, as if he realised he had already talked too much.

The information that Bialnick was in Kieff took me completely by surprise. I was so dazed that

after leaving Dolgoff I almost lost my way. I recalled that Bialnick had talked of being transferred to Kieff, so this must be the same Bialnick that I had known. And Katia must be in Kieff, too. A thrilling hope took hold of me. I could not see my way clear to a renewal of friendship with her, but I trusted to fate and my efforts.

I took up my new course of study with fresh zeal. Because Katia was so near, because of the new hope that was burning within me, the dry pages of anatomy and materia medica became as attractive to me as volumes of poetry. I was happy all the time because I was breathing the same air with Katia; and every evening I was doubly happy, because then I walked past her residence, which, I soon learned, was in the Pecherskoi quarter, the most fashionable part of the city.

But I suffered from material want. Living expenses here were much higher than at Vilno, and my earnings were less. I eked out my livelihood by doing some odd literary jobs for a well-known periodical, but the remuneration was so meager that I was often compelled to live on one meal a day. However, I was not discouraged. On the contrary, my ambition was stimulated, and the time of the missing meal was spent in writing verses. My muse was very active in those days. With ink and paper before me, and a pen in my hand, I felt as if I were riding on a fast-sailing

cloud, with the earth below like a mere child's ball.

Yet I could not substitute verses for all my meals. So I advertised in a local newspaper, and the second insertion procured me a position as tutor in a wealthy family. The payment I agreed upon was sufficient to carry me through college. The first lessons I gave were satisfactory, and now all seemed easy sailing. But I was soon again reminded that a rose is scarcely ever without a thorn. One afternoon, as I presented myself at the appointed time, I found the father instead of his two sons.

He bowed stiffly and in a courteous tone said: “Well—a—you will excuse me—a—your name—a—deceived me.” And he smiled, as if he wished me to understand the rest.

I looked dubiously at him.

“Don't you see—Mr. Russakoff?” he added. “I don't believe you are the kind of tutor my boys need.”

“Could you kindly specify my deficiencies, so that I may benefit by your opinion?” I asked smilingly, though I was filled with sudden despair.

“I beg your pardon, sir.” He smiled graciously. “The fault—a—is not with you, but—a—with—a—the Jew——”

My feelings at that instant were beyond all description. I had suffered many injuries of a similar kind before, but never had I felt so hurt as

at this time. I went to my room and threw myself upon my bed, and, man though I now was, burst into a flood of tears—tears of rage, of humiliation, of helplessness. Afterward I sat smarting at my window, watching daylight turn to dusk and twilight to darkness.

“He finds no fault with me, but with the Jew.” This ran through my brain for days. However, little by little my wounds were healed. I soon began to reason and look for excuses for my abuser, as I had always done, and I found some justification for his inhuman act. But I could not forget that my college fees were due and my board bill was not settled.

And now a daring plan came into my mind—a plan suggested by my recent occupation as tutor and by my desire to see Katia. I wrote a brief formal note to Katia, without giving my real name, stating that I was a student in the university who desired to do some tutoring, mentioning the branches which I felt competent to teach, and explaining that I was writing her because I understood that she desired instruction in one of these subjects.

Two days later the answer came. She desired a tutor in German, she wrote—in fact, she had just applied for one at the university; so she would be glad indeed to talk with me and perhaps arrange to give her the desired lessons.

CHAPTER V

I SEE WITHOUT BEING SEEN

THE following day I ascended the steps of the Bialnick mansion with a quivering heart. A footman immediately answered my ring, ushered me into a sumptuously furnished room, and disappeared with my card.

A few minutes later a side door opened. Katia ! At sight of her I trembled so that I could hardly keep my feet. Katia !—Katia at last ! The same Katia, but so grown, so changed. In my dreams of her all these years I had always seen her as a slight girl in a short frock, with her hair hanging down her back. Now she stood before me a young woman. The slight figure had matured ; her gown swept the floor ; the luxurious hair was coiled at the back of her head. But her luminous eyes, of no particular colour, but rather a mixture of many colours, were the same, and her soft smile was the same, for she was smiling at something when she came in, and I could see she was as graceful, as sweet as ever.

I steadied myself with my hands upon the back of a chair, and wondered if she would recognise me. But I had changed in the years of our separation

more than she had. She greeted me as an absolute stranger.

"Is this Mr. Russakoff?" she asked in her low, sweet voice.

I acknowledged my name with a bow. I could not trust myself to speak. But I immediately gained control of myself and we proceeded to business.

After we had arranged the hours of instruction, price, and books, I remarked: "I ought to inform you, perhaps, at the outset, that I am a Jew. Perhaps you have objections to my race?"

"Mr. Russakoff, your question surprises me," she answered. "Why, my father is known as a friend of the Jews. As to myself"—here she laughed softly and a blush crept down her neck—"my dearest playmate when I was a little girl was a Jewish boy."

At this the control I was trying so hard to maintain almost left me. I gripped myself and said with a show of calmness: "I did not know how you felt; some people are so narrow-minded and so prejudiced"; and I told her of my recent experience.

"That is a shame!" she cried indignantly. And then, as if to express her feeling, she added: "It is, of course, natural for me to like the Jews on account of my early intimacy."

For a moment I was tempted to disclose my identity, but I obeyed the advice of prudence to remain unknown.

I soon left her and repaired immediately to my scantily furnished room. She recalled our early romance as a mere childish fancy, while with me it had matured into a deep-rooted affection. I now realised more than ever how deeply I loved her.

But what a gulf there was now between us! We were no longer boy and girl, I told myself, with the natural impulses of childhood. She was now a charming woman of high social position, and I—a vagabond, a poor devil of a student, with nothing to inspire or charm her. True, she had called me brother when I was a mere tramp, a wandering little gipsy, but that was many years ago; true, she still remembered me, but to her I was only a pleasant memory. That was all I was to her—a pleasant memory—a bit of recollection of playful childhood.

This change of thought brought the images of her father and my father to my mind. I shuddered—the blood of Judge Bialnick was flowing in her veins. The consciousness of my race, of my faith (little as it was), of the duty I owed to my innocent father, stirred my blood and woke my calm nature. I ought to think only of vengeance. I ought to abandon my wild plan and see Katia no more!

But when the decision was half made my heart was torn with anguish and an irresistible desire to see her—just to see her and hear the cadence of her voice again—that and no more; just to be near

her and feel her presence—nothing further; just to be her teacher without ever breathing to her the secret of my heart—that was all I wished.

CHAPTER VI

CUPID'S ARROWS

WHEN I called to give my pupil her first lesson I found her father present. A shiver passed through me as he grasped my hand. He eyed me so intently that I thought he had recognised me, but his remark that followed convinced me that he had not.

"It is rather strange, Mr. Russakoff," he said, "that there is a close resemblance among intellectual Jews. At the first glance I thought I had met you before."

I made an evasive remark, and he chatted on, asking about my native town, my parents, my previous studies; to most of which questions, I am sorry to record, I gave false replies in order to avoid suspicion.

As he sat talking in his big arm-chair I watched him furtively. The change in him was almost startling; his hair and beard were fast turning white, and there was a perceptible nervousness in his movements; even the hue of his skin had changed. His eyelids drooped frequently, and there was a certain laxity, like that of extreme indolence, in

his speech and gestures. Every few minutes he nervously passed his hand over his eyes, an act which I soon perceived had become with him a habit.

I found myself speechless in his presence. I was surprised at myself. I had always told myself that when chance brought us together I would denounce him and take vengeance; but now that I was in his presence I felt no anger—instead, I pitied him. I could easily see that he constantly suffered great pain, that he was a physical wreck; and it was obvious that he suffered mental agony no less intense than the physical. For the time, compassion banished my hatred.

I continued giving Katia lessons four times a week without so much as betraying a sign of my identity. Occasionally we would drift off the lesson to the discussion of other matters. We talked of history, of novels, of poetry, of characters in fiction. I often wondered where I got the phrases and picturesque descriptions which I used in making my ideas clear to her. I simply drew inspiration from her to give it back to her. Sometimes her look would thrill me; then I would drop my eyes, and when again I raised them I would see her cheeks suffused with blushes and her own eyes burning with intense emotion. I would wonder if that show of feeling was induced by our talk—or was it an indication that she cared for

me? I realised that I was a nobody, and therefore she could not care for me; and yet how kindly, how sympathetically she treated me—me, a vagabond, a son of the hated race, a child of persecution!

I was playing with fire. I knew it, and yet I loved to be burned. I would feel happy and miserable at the same time. I would become possessed at once with jealousy and hatred of myself for harbouring that jealousy. I reasoned that if she now loved me—Ivan Petrowitch Russakoff—she had forgotten Israel Yudelowitch Abramowitch, and I could not bear the idea that she did not love my old self.

One afternoon I gave her my interpretation of Heine's "Traumbilder, II." I read with all the glow and enthusiasm with which this bard, whose soul I understood better than that of any other poet, has always inspired me. I forgot my sorrows in feeling his. His words seemed to me like drops of honey dripping from a poisoned honeycomb. His heart was poisoned with the same venom that embittered my own. I have always imagined when reading Heine that when he laughed tears were trickling down his cheeks, and when he cried a smile of defiance and irony played around the deep corners of his mouth.

While I read, Katia sat with her lustrous eyes fixed upon me. She did not once stir. She seemed

as much possessed by this magnificent lyric as I was.

"Read it again, Gospodin Russakoff," she asked, sighing deeply, when I had finished the last line. "You speak like a poet yourself, and how your eyes change from their steady brown to pitch-black! You remind me of Israel, the Jewish boy I told you of," she added, smiling faintly. "I almost fear you when you read as you have done—your eyes look so strange when you are aroused."

"You must not be afraid of me," I said, thrown into throbbing confusion by her words. "I am too weak to hurt anybody."

The night following that afternoon I lay a long time awake, my mind a prey to incoherent thoughts and memories. "How your eyes change from their steady brown to pitch-black" passed through my mind again and again. I had never noticed the colour of my eyes. She had. What could it mean? "You remind me of Israel, the Jewish boy I told you of." I again recalled her words. Evidently the memory of that boy was still sweet to her, and evidently she was interested in me. My heart almost leaped out of my breast at the thought.

I was near falling asleep from mere mental exhaustion; my mind was raving already—just a wink from unconsciousness—when in the blank darkness of my chamber the form of a female shaped itself before me. Thick, light-brown hair with a

silky gloss, brilliantly smiling eyes, an exquisitely shaped mouth with deep corners, fine arched eyebrows, a fine bosom—it remained but a moment, then gradually faded away, and in its place the small golden crucifix which Katia wore suspended from a fine gold chain around her neck grew larger and larger until it assumed the shape and size of a female form. A minute later the figure of a woman again appeared, and again it vanished, and that little golden cross was metamorphosed into the form of a person, and—behold! the features were mine. Oh, that little golden cross! What pangs and mortification it added to my wounded heart! As soon as I would begin to think of Katia (and when did I not think of her?) that tiny cross, as if by magic, would appear before my fancy, swaying to and fro and growing larger and larger until it assumed the size and proportions of a human form with my own features.

Weeks passed by. The hope that had sprung up within me was soon succeeded by doubt, by thoughts of my own insignificance. Of course I loved her madly—loved her as no one else had ever loved, I thought. But I had also been in love many times with the brilliant stars that shone on a serene frosty night. And was I not as far from my beloved Katia as I was from the stars? “I, a poor vagabond, a struggling student who earns his bread by giving lessons and scribbling lyrics at a penny a line, a wandering Jew hated and scorned

by all, without a place to call home—have I the right to love Katia and drag her down to my level—her who, besides her social position, is in every respect superior to me?” I would ask myself.

“But have I no right to love her, though she is so much above me?” I would demand in behalf of my passion. “Must the poor’s right to love be restricted, just as are all his other privileges, and confined within a narrow compass?” And anger would swell my breast against all the rich people of the world, as if they had taken sides against me. “She may not reciprocate my love—that is as she will. I only justify my right to love her.”

But if she was to learn that I loved her, I told myself, she would discharge me immediately. Dismissal I could not stand. I would rather a thousand times over suffer the pangs of an untold love than be sent away from her. Her servant—her slave—I cared not what my position was so long as I could continue to see her.

In one of our talks I casually touched the history of the Jews in Spain, the pages of which are aflame with fire and blood. I must have talked with no little fervour and enthusiasm, for I noticed tears sparkling in the eyes of my pupil. I asked whether I had hurt her feelings. She only smiled in response, but a minute later she said in her sweet, sympathetic voice: “It must have hurt you to speak of it, Mr. Russakoff. How your eyes changed !”

After that lesson I went home like a somnambulist.

I recall a collision with something or somebody, and that somebody muttered: "It is really a shame to have drunkards stagger through the streets." Next I remember my head met with something as bulky and as hard as mine, and the owner of it grumbled, "*Bolshay Durak* [big fool]!" and then I remember, as through a mist, myself seated on the old sofa in my room, my head between my hands, looking fixedly upon the head of a nail in my carpetless floor. I cannot tell how long I studied that object before a jolly laugh, which sounded queer in my ears, interrupted my reflection, and a hand shook me by the shoulder rather violently.

I looked up and recognised Ephraim Razovski.

"You must have a nightmare," laughed Razovski again, slapping me on the shoulder. "I rapped on your door more than etiquette permits, but you were evidently so absorbed in your dreams that you did not hear me at all. So I ventured to open the door myself, for I saw the key sticking on the inside. Wake up, comrade! You must not dream in your fur coat." Again he laughed a hearty, sonorous peal.

"You are perhaps dreaming of writing for the *Morning Star* an article against assimilation, you Orientalist, you Ghetto mystic," he continued, having received no answer from me. "You always come out with your bosh about the glorious Jewish past, their wonderful history and their philosophic monotheism, and so forth, and so forth. Can't we

look into the face of truth and realise that the world is waiting for us to assimilate if we just say the word? Wake up, you dreamer!" And he slapped me on the shoulder again.

"There must be something wrong with you," Razovski continued, shaking me by my long hair. "Wake up, Israel [he always called me by my Jewish name]. If it is love, a night's rest and sound sleep will readily cure you of it. I fell in love at least a score of times, and every time I thought I would not be able to survive it, and in spite of that I lived long enough to fall in love with some other 'best girl in the world.'"

He took my head in both his hands and examined my face playfully. "I surmised correctly," he laughed. "Your absent-mindedness and these blue rings betray you. Indeed, you are more sensitive than I thought; this is only a momentary sickness. Once I believed that a person could love one girl only, and if that one rejected him he should seize the first knife he could get and send his soul to the better world. My twenty-six years of experience, however, have taught me differently. If you are in love with a girl and she is indifferent to you, seize the first opportunity and fall in love with another. This is the best cure I can recommend as a layman. Ha! ha! ha! Isn't that a good prescription for a lawyer?"

"Well, good night, comrade," he said after a few moments of silence. "I just dropped in to see you.

It is getting dark and I have yet a lot of work to do. Well, good night. I will let you dream of your best girl," and he slammed the door after him.

CHAPTER VII

A GREAT EVENT

THE next day was the ever-memorable March 13, 1881—the date of the assassination of Alexander II. The bomb which exploded in St. Petersburg shook the entire empire. Immediately the whole nation was in mourning; the theaters were closed, music was forbidden, every place of amusement was desolated. The very air was filled with sadness and fear; every heart trembled with consternation, for even a loud laugh was regarded suspiciously. The student element feared the most, for the students were known as the chief conspirators. Following the murder, they were arrested everywhere on the slightest shadow of suspicion; thousands were imprisoned during that month. Close watch was kept over all the students, and the least suspicion or denunciation was sufficient to throw a student into prison, perhaps never to come out again. People in the streets did not talk above a whisper. One heard of nothing but arrests.

That night I sat in my room trying to study, but could not fix my mind upon my books. The news of the murder of the Czar and a fear that in some manner the Jews would be made scapegoats

had unnerved me. I moved restlessly about my room, stirring my fire, peering out of my window at the snow-sheeted roofs, listening to the passage of crunching footsteps and tinkling sleigh-bells.

About midnight there was a gentle knock on my door. I jumped up with a palpitating heart (though I knew the knock was too gentle for the police) and turned the knob. A short, stocky man wearing glasses stood before me. He was Mr. Levinski, a gifted journalist, with whom I had become acquainted through Ephraim.

Mr. Levinski entered, pale and shivering. "No time to stop," he whispered hurriedly. "I have just come to warn you. Razovski has been arrested. Examine your books—quick. The police are ransacking the whole city. Eight Jewish students have been arrested. Good night." And he closed the door behind him.

I bolted the door and examined every scrap of paper I had in my trunk. I burned all the letters I had ever received from Razovski and some manuscripts that might be construed in a manner to throw suspicion upon me.

I thought I had nothing to be afraid of, and a little later I tested the lock of my door and crept into bed. I had scarcely settled myself for sleep when three blows against the door made the walls of the house shake.

"In the name of the law, open!" thundered a voice.

I leaped out of bed and unlocked the door. Four officers entered.

"Is your name Ivan Petrowitch Russakoff?" demanded the leader.

I said that was my name.

"Do you know a student by the name of Razovski?" I was asked abruptly.

"Yes."

"Did you have any communication with him?"

I said that we had exchanged some friendly letters.

"When did you first get acquainted with him?"

I explained to him.

"Do you have any relations in St. Petersburg by the name of Russakoff?"

I told him that I was an orphan and that I did not know any of my relatives, nor in fact did I know whether I had any.

"Search the room," commanded the chief to his subordinates. Every nook was ransacked. They even threw my pillows out of their cases. But nothing suspicious was found.

"What are these short lines?" demanded the chief, pointing at a manuscript poem, without reading it.

"It is a poem," I said.

"A what?"

"A poem," I repeated.

"Well, you'll have to explain to the chief of the detective bureau what a poem is," he replied

with a burst of laughter. And ordering me to appear before the chief, he and the other officers departed.

The relief I felt at their departure can be easily imagined. While they had been ransacking my room I saw the prison gates yawning to receive me. I went to bed, not to sleep, but to wonder fearfully what changes the next few days might bring.

Presently there came a third knocking at my door—this time so gently that I could scarcely hear it. I held my breath. Everything was still; only the buzzing of the burning lamp was heard. I feared to answer the knock, so I rose on my elbow and stared in terror in the direction of the door.

“Israel!” came through the keyhole in a husky voice.

“Who is it?” I asked.

“Open.”

I opened the door and started back a step or two. A large, bearded muzhik, in a sheepskin hat and fur cloak, girdled by a red belt, stood in the doorway. Warning me by a gesture to keep silent, he bolted the door behind him.

In another instant the beard and hat were thrown off and I beheld Dolgoff.

“Razovski is in the net,” he said in a low, tremulous voice. “As usual, I escaped,” he added with a faint smile. “I came to you for help.”

I answered nothing.

“Not for me; I am safe,” he continued. “Razov-

ski's friend, Judge Bialnick, is in danger. His house is guarded. The police spy him. If he leaves it in three-quarters of an hour (which he will unless he is warned in time) he will never see his home again."

"I'll go," I said, trembling with agitation.

"Don't say yes before you hear the nature of your mission," he said smilingly. "Bialnick's house is guarded three squares around. You will be stopped half a dozen times within the Pecherskoi, and unless successful you will not come back to this cosy nook. I don't want you to undertake this task without fully realising the risk attached to it."

"I'll go," I repeated parrot-like, shivering with anxiety for Katia.

"I would have gone myself, but my absence from another place would ruin a score of faithful members. A secret meeting, which was discovered by the police, was to be held to-night. Every member who will start for our meeting-place will never see his home again. I don't wish to impose upon you, but if you are fearless enough you will have a chance to save the life of a noble man, who is also a champion of the Jews."

"I'll go," I reiterated, moving about impatiently. Many conflicting thoughts rushed through my brain; it was the battle between revenge and forgiveness. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and

pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you," a weird voice whispered to me. "I'll go—I'll go," I reiterated nervously, lest I should change my mind.

Dolgoff took a bundle from under his arm, unrolled it, and disclosed an artificial beard, a pair of glasses, and a cap with a cockade. "Ready?" he asked. In an instant I was entirely transformed; my daily companions could not have recognised me. "Remember, you are Doctor Orshanski, the famous surgeon. The impersonation is complete." He examined me studiously and added, half to me, half to himself: "The hat should be drawn a little lower—that's better."

"Now go," he said. "You will find a droshky on the corner. Get in without saying a word to the driver. Ask no questions on the way. If you are stopped, answer 'Doctor Orshanski.' If you are asked where you are bound for, say, 'Miss Bialnick sprained her ankle.' The coachman will put you off at the right place. Ring the bell and ask to see the Judge personally. If you are refused, say 'Pax.' When you meet him, don't introduce yourself, but simply tell him to stay at home three days on pretense of sickness. When that is said, don't add another word, but depart at once. Now go, quick; don't lose a moment's time."

The droshky sped like lightning for fully twenty minutes. The driver avoided principal streets. I was only stopped once, and before I had time to

give my name the officer said, "Pass on, Dr. Orshanski," without any interrogations. Other particulars of the ride I do not remember. All the way my brain was so feverish that I was like one stunned. When I was just in the act of ringing the bell the door opened and the Judge appeared before me, robed in a heavy fur cloak. I delivered my message, and for fear of being recognised by him I turned quickly and sped home.

CHAPTER VIII

LOVE CONQUERS DISCRETION

THE following morning I was called before the chief, and after a brief trial was told to go home, but warned that I was "under the suspicion of the police."

On my way home I learned from Mr. Levinski, who had had an interview with the chief of police concerning Ephraim, that Ephraim was also arrested on suspicion only, but his case was rather serious because he had carried on some correspondence with Professor Dragmanoff, who was a great agitator of Nihilism and who had fled to Switzerland. The worst for Ephraim was, however, his being found destroying papers, and the discovery in his trunk of letters from Dragmanoff after his denial of ever having corresponded with the Professor. Besides other "censored" books, "The Revisor" (Gogol's famous drama of corruption), which had been particularly suppressed that winter, was also found in Ephraim's possession. Mr. Levinski gave it as his opinion that Ephraim would certainly be sent to Siberia.

However, the misfortune that befell my friend, and the still graver affliction that the nation had

sustained by losing the noblest of its emperors, were as naught compared to my anxiety about Katia. Of what interest or value was Russia to me? What did it matter that the liberal Czar was assassinated when Katia, who was more to me than my nation, my creed, my race, and above kings and queens, was away from me and yet dwelt in the innermost chamber of my heart? For who is more selfish, jealous, conceited than a lover? Human beings, the animal kingdom, and other matters like pen, ink, or paper, serve only one purpose—to communicate his or her feverish sentiments to the beloved. Even the world plays a trifling part when the egotistic lover is engaged in the amorous vanity of the heart. And yet the world was built on love, so the poets say. Love is the magnetism which holds together the molecules of humanity.

I stayed in my room two days, and then, the excitement being over, I went to give Katia her regular lesson. I was shown into the reception room, where I found her taking leave of a tall, stout man of military bearing. I had met him several times before, but he had evaded an introduction, always overlooking me with obvious contempt.

This time he could not avoid meeting me, but he acknowledged the introduction formally with a bow that seemed to mean: "What the devil is the Jew doing here?"

He remained only a few minutes longer, and when

he departed he did not give me even so much as a friendly look.

"Is it not horrible, Mr. Russakoff?" Katia began tremulously. "My father has been sick in bed for the four days since the fearful news reached us. He takes this catastrophe so to heart. It is terrible! Oh, the Nihilists are ruining this country! Why cannot people live peacefully, I wonder?"

She dropped into a chair as if from sheer exhaustion. She evidently knew nothing of misery, of suffering, of starvation, of oppression—she did not even know her own father.

For a while we talked of her father, of the Nihilists, of the possible results of the Czar's assassination; and then our talk shifted to Heine, whose "Reisebilder" she was reading with my assistance.

"I always wondered how those poets could write so much on the single subject of love," Katia remarked; and then she immediately blushed, as if she wished to recall her words.

"Because they felt so much," I answered.

"It seems strange," she went on hesitatingly, playing with the golden crucifix that dangled over her bosom. "When my feelings are touched I have very few words to say, and for the rest"—she broke the sentence with a forced laugh—"I cry. I think that tears are the poetry that flows from the very depths of one's soul, while words come

more often from the brain. Don't you ever feel inclined to shed tears, Mr. Russakoff?"

"Sometimes," I replied in a stifled tone; and immediately I added with an attempt at lightness: "And sometimes I relieve my feelings as the poets do—in verses."

A silence of a minute or more followed, during which she glanced at me several times from under her lowered eyelashes.

"Do you know," she resumed, clearing her throat as she spoke, "the more I see of you the more you remind me of Israel. He was always melancholy."

Again there was silence. I quivered with delight at the introduction of my old self. "What became of this early friend?" I asked at length.

She flushed slightly and twirled the chain of her crucifix.

"He ran away. He was too sensitive. In that respect he was also like you."

"I suppose he felt guilty of some wrong. Sensitive people cannot bear their own wrongs, though they can tolerate the same wrongs in others," I rejoined.

"No. It was I who was to blame for it all." She flushed again. "I committed the wrong and he was punished. My father was a little too harsh on him."

Then she added: "I am inclined to believe that my father was also very fond of that boy, for he talked of him quite often, and of his purpose to

educate him and make a great man of him. He was exceptionally bright."

"And yet you drove him out of your house and forced him to become a vagrant, as he undoubtedly has become," I said, forgetting for the moment that I was supposed to know nothing of this incident.

She glanced at me in bewilderment at these words. "You are quite mistaken, Mr. Russakoff," she rejoined somewhat confusedly. "He ran away voluntarily."

I perceived that she was not aware that I had been asked to leave, and I saw no reason for enlightening her. After an awkward pause I said jealously: "It is unfortunate for two young people of different stations in life to fall in love. It is better that they should be separated. Think of that Jewish boy"—I was smiling and yet trembling—"now grown to manhood and come to claim you."

"It would all depend," she replied, looking down and fingering her crucifix.

"Yes, it would all depend on his being rich and famous and handsome," I said bitterly.

"Oh, no. It would all depend on his being the same as he had been," she said very softly, her face warm with blushes. "There is nothing specific we love; we love something indefinable, and we can only love as long as that indefinable attraction exists."

"But suppose," I continued eagerly, my eyes fixed intently upon her, "your early lover should

come as a poor student, nameless, without a fortune, and yet possessed of that indefinable something?"

She quivered perceptibly and turned her eyes away from me, her breath coming fast and short.

All my feelings of unworthiness, all my vows of silence went to the winds. I leaned forward, on fire with love, and caught her hand. "Katia!" I whispered.

She started.

"Katia!" I implored. "Don't you know me?"

She trembled, and her head sank forward so that I could not see her face.

"Katia—Katia, I have lived for years with one thought, one desire, one hope—to find you. And at last I have found you—Katia!"

Her breast rose and fell violently, but she did not speak.

"I am the same Israel—the Israel who used to play with you—who used to love you." I pressed her hand more closely. "Don't you remember—don't you remember that afternoon when we sat together? Don't you remember your promise? Aren't you the same Katia—the same little Katia who once loved me a little—a little bit, at least?"

A hot tear splashed upon my wrist.

"Katia!" I cried, all my soul in that one word.

I dropped to the floor beside her and dared to touch her chin, with the intention of raising her head. But it came slowly up of its own accord. She turned her glorious eyes, brimming with tears,

full upon me, and her face threw open heaven to me.

“You—you! Oh, Israel!” she whispered.

CHAPTER IX

I BEND TO THE CROSS

AFTER a while we began to talk of the years that had passed since I had tramped through the sleety night away from Zamok. She told me of her experiences, all of which were very quiet, for her life had moved on evenly and happily; and I told her of the Yeshiva of Javolin, of Malke, of the gymnasium at Vilno. Then our talk became more broken.

"How surprised father will be to learn who you really are," she said at one time during the evening. I made haste to suggest that it might be wisest not to reveal my identity to him just yet, giving reasons which, though plausible, were not the ones which actually influenced me. To this she agreed.

When I told her the poems which appeared weekly in the *Moskovski Gazette*, and for which she had often expressed admiration, were mine, she assumed an "I-told-you-so" air that was bewitching.

"Don't you remember, I used to say that some day you would be a great poet like Pushkin or Lermontoff——"

"And then," I interrupted her, "you remember what you promised?"

"Why, you foolish Israel—then," she laughed rapturously and dropped her head on my breast.

I asked about the officer whom I had seen so frequently at her house and to whom I had that day been introduced, and she confessed to me that he had proposed to her twice within the last two weeks.

"When you think of that fine-looking man, how can you love me?" I asked with a tinge of jealousy. "Me—a Jew?"

"Oh, you foolish, foolish boy!" she cried, again showing her affection in a way that was more expressive than words.

"But don't you know that the law stands in the way of our marriage?" I asked. For the time, this had escaped my own mind.

"Why, no, it doesn't. You only have to be baptised—that's all," she returned innocently.

Baptised—that's all. I thought I had long abandoned my faith and was free from its beliefs and prejudices, but at these words, spoken in a matter-of-fact voice, my Jewish sentiment arose in revolt against this imminent apostasy.

I might not believe in Judaism, but could I even, as a matter of form, adopt the faith of the persecutors of my race?

"Of course you believe in Christ," said Katia.

Evidently she did not fully understand the difference between a Jew and a Christian.

I gazed at her, but a mist gathered before my eyes and a thousand bells seemed to chime in my ears. All I could see was the golden cross upon Katia's breast—to me the symbol of my people's wrongs. But in another instant I saw Katia's eyes, glorious with love.

"Yes," I whispered.

"And you'll be baptised?"

"Yes," I repeated. The word almost choked me.

"Oh, Israel, we'll be so happy!" and she slipped her arms about my neck and kissed me again and again.

What was then race or faith to me? Who thought of religion? I felt her heart beat against mine—I felt her glowing cheek against mine. I loved her; she loved me. What does love care for creeds and ceremonies which have emanated from cold or mystic brains? Love was my faith—Katia's faith. Is not God the incomprehensible term for love?

CHAPTER X

THE BURDEN OF THE CROSS

WALKING home that afternoon through the Krestchatik—the main thoroughfare—which was teeming with busy pedestrians, my senses were stunned. All I could hear was a deafening clamour of bells. Swiftly I traversed the long, beautiful streets as if impelled by a cyclone. Now and then I raised my eyes to a monument, a church, a cathedral, and instinctively frowned. My brain seemed to have become suddenly benumbed. At the junction of Podol with Pecherskoi I stopped involuntarily and stared like an idiot at St. Vladimir's monument, which is supposed to mark the site of a fountain at which his children were baptised. The high-stuccoed obelisk filled me with a mysterious, superstitious awe, and as my eyes rested on the wooden crucifix I murmured to myself the inscription which it bears in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." I smiled and read it again and smiled. A youngster looked at me and shouted: "Look at him! He is crazy!"

Coming into my room, I lighted my lamp and put a few coals upon the fire, which had all but expired.

The lamplight was too intense, I thought, and I turned down the wick, leaving a scarcely visible glow. One thinks best in darkness.

I moved a chair near the grate, and resting my feet on the fender I fixed my eyes on the glowing spots within. Listlessly I looked at the little tongues of flame shooting forth here and there and battling for life among the dead coals and spiritless ashes. I was soon engrossed in this play of life and death, when suddenly a coal crackled with a short, crisp snap, like that of agony, and rolling aside sent forth fiery lines, which soon formed the outlines of a human face. Against the black coals, which were piled up like a braided skein of hair, glittered two bright spots like sparkling eyes; there below the flames curved in the shape of lips slightly opened; and lower still two red coals intersected to form a golden crucifix. The arms of the crucifix increased in length; then the face vanished; in another instant, at the point of the arms of the cross, I beheld a face without a body or hands or feet. Then the arms of the human form extended along the arms of the cross, legs along the foot of it, a body—and lo! the cross vanished and I beheld my own image.

I remember that I gazed stupidly at this fire-drawn picture for a long while, when another spectacle appeared before me.

The gorgeous Vladimir Cathedral, one of the holiest of the "holy quarter" of Kieff, was brilliantly illuminated by myriads of tapers. The high-

arched ceilings looked like a frosty winter sky with innumerable twinkling stars. Hundreds of bells tolled sonorously, clamorously, and their resounding echo made the earth tremble. How loud they rang and clanged! The high portals of the cathedral were open, and people—thousands of them—were coming in with bowed heads and solemn faces. “A Jew is going to be baptised,” I heard some one whisper.

It seemed to me I stood before the altar, above which Varnitzoff’s “Madonna and Child” shone with unusual brilliancy, and a priest in his clerical garb stood by the baptismal font and held a bronze crucifix in his hand.

The bells continued to chime while a great crowd of people were filling the immense church. Yet everything about me was so quiet that I could almost hear the movements of the priest’s lips as he solemnly rolled his eyes and murmured some prayer. He opened a small hymn-book and read something from it. My eyes were fixed upon the “Madonna and Child” in front of me, half in admiration, half in bewilderment.

Suddenly the spectators were hushed as if by magic, and two apparitions elbowed their way to where the priest and I stood. I shrank back with fright as the ghosts advanced a step and put themselves between me and the font. One was shrouded and wrapped in a Talis, and had his hands and long, bony arms clasped over his head as if in despair.

The other was the ghost of a woman, tall and lean, hollow-cheeked, with hair dishevelled, and wild eyes that seemed about to dart from their cavernous sockets. The priest checked himself.

The apparitions came close to me; their shrouds touched my clothes; I shuddered. They both fixed upon me their ghostly eyes, which expressed more horror than words could tell. The man-ghost relaxed his clasped hands and motioned to the right. I looked. The myriads of candles were suddenly extinguished, and palpable darkness pervaded the very atmosphere of the church. Suddenly, as from the mouth of a volcano, a streak of flame leaped from the ground, which had been occupied by the audience. By its light I noticed before me priests in robes like clergymen with big crucifixes in their hands groping about in darkness. They all came forward to the flame and threw fagots from a pile that lay close by. The flame turned into a big blaze. The priests lifted their voices and chanted religious hymns above the noisy crackling. Their song was melodious, devotional, sad. Groans reached my ears; I turned. An old man with long, silvery beard and hair and a beautiful maiden with arms clinging around his neck were brought before the fire. The maiden's massive, luxuriant black hair mingled with the old man's white beard, and their tears streamed down together. They lifted their eyes heavenward, and the blaze lighted up their contrasting countenances—his marred by old

age and sorrow, hers blooming and sweet. The patriarch uttered in a weird voice, that echoed far and wide: "Hear, O Israel! God our Lord, God is one." Then he exchanged kisses with the maiden by his side, and their tears flowed in one stream. "Yahweh is one," both repeated.

A murmur of surprise passed from priest to priest. Then again everything was hushed. Solemnly the aged man and the maiden were led to the rising flames. The fagots crackled louder and louder, the flames rose higher and higher, the priests sang and chanted with more devotion, and a weird voice answered: "Yahweh is one."

A chill ran through my frame. I turned my face away from this horrible sight. It had vanished. Again impenetrable darkness, and then another lurid scene.

The woman-ghost pointed to the left. In place of the blazing fagots there flowed a broad river, on the bank of which stood a motley crowd of Jews and Jewesses, gallant young men and handsome maidens, and all looked terrified and wailed and wrung their hands. Some elderly people lay prostrate upon the ground and wept bitterly. Others rambled about as if they had lost their wits. Suddenly all were hushed by one of the crowd, and all surrounded him, as if to listen to his advice. He said something in a fervent, solemn tone, and as he spoke his tears flowed profusely. The audience seemed deeply impressed; some nodded their heads, as if what was

said was gratifying to them; others shook their heads in negation. Then was heard the trampling of hoofs, like that of a whole army of cavalry. Alarm and consternation were expressed in every countenance. Again they flocked around the man, who had addressed them, as if asking his advice. His face showed firmness, his eyes expressed resolution, and he spoke again in a determined tone. The trampling of horses was heard louder and louder. The whole crowd moved toward the sandy edge, which was washed by the ebb-tide. Then every man drew from under his coat a flashing two-edged knife. They waited. Hush! The trampling of hoofs grew louder and more distinct—an army of cavalry was in sight. Old men, women, maidens, little children threw their heads back, and the flashing knives were passed over their necks hurriedly. “Quick—they are coming!” they murmured impatiently to one another. The crowd became smaller and smaller and the number of corpses with ripped throats grew larger and larger. A long stream of blood flowed into the river. Only one venerable man, who I thought resembled the gray man in the previous scene, and a young girl survived. The bloody knife glittered in his hand, and with the other he embraced the maiden. The trampling of hoofs grew still louder—a troop of soldiers galloping on horses and with upright bayonets in their hands rapidly approached. The maiden glanced wildly at the troops, threw back her head,

and stretched out her neck. A tide of blood gushed forth; the lifeless body rolled over the heap of corpses. The old man raised his eyes heavenward, spread his arms in supplication, and shouted, "Yahweh is one!" and passing the knife over his own throat he also fell on the heap of dead bodies.

I opened my eyes. I found my landlady standing at the foot of the bed, a trifle frightened.

"Mr. Russakoff," she explained, "I wondered what could have happened to you. Ten o'clock, and you were not up yet. I sent up my little girl, and she said the door was unlocked and you were asleep in your clothes. You have looked a little melancholy of late, and I thought God knows what has happened to you. You must have had bad dreams, for you were crying in your sleep when I came in. But crying in sleep is a sign of joy."

I tried to remember what had happened to me the night before, but all that I remember was that I began to undress myself. I thought of Katia and of my obligation to meet her this morning, but the memory of my dream chilled my brain. However, my reason predominated, and I said to myself as I prepared to go to my beloved, "*Träume sind Schäume*," and tried to banish the vision from my mind. I paced the room with the towel in my hands, wiping my face and laughing at my own superstition. "Dreams are the fruit of idle brains," I murmured; yet the one I had just experienced continued to annoy me, and my heart beat like a sledge-hammer.

Finally I conquered my superstition and set out to visit Katia.

She met me in the hall, finger on lips. "S-h! Papa is waiting in the reception room," she whispered. "I told him of our engagement, but I did not tell him who you were. At first he was surprised, but I soon brought him around to my way of thinking. He said he would have to give us his blessing, since I loved you so much." She clasped my arm tightly, and so we went into the reception room.

Judge Bialnick did not look particularly pleased, but nevertheless he received me almost cordially.

"Since Katia has chosen you, it must be for the best," he said, placing one of his trembling hands upon my shoulder. "I know my Katia would choose only the right one."

He drew her within his other arm and kissed her.

I shivered at his touch. The peculiar incidents of my dream appeared before me. Something within me wanted to throw his hand from my shoulder and cry out "Murderer!" But I controlled myself and stood quietly with my eyes down while he wished us all happiness.

CHAPTER XI

ON MY WAY TO NAZARETH

THE weeks that followed my betrothal were a dream of happiness. I was with Katia a great deal of each day, which is the best description I can give of how blissful this period was. I believe that a lover, like a poet, is born, not made, and I think I was born a lover. A few months passed by, during which I came in contact with nobody but my beloved Katia. I gave up my lodgings in the Jewish quarter Libedski, in order that my connections with the Jewish people might be cut off entirely; and I did not inform any of my friends of my betrothal nor where I lived, in order to avoid all argument or comment that the step I was about to take would call forth from them. I cannot say that I succeeded in dispelling the struggling thoughts against changing my faith, but I overcame them. I fought hard and bitterly, and a constant battle raged in my breast. But Katia's image helped me to conquer.

My baptism was set for Sunday, May 18th. I did not wish to have the ceremony performed publicly, so it had been arranged that the baptism

would take place in the house of Mr. Bialnick's priest.

The night preceding this event I could not sleep a wink. I must confess that this act of changing beliefs appeared to me a comedy in which I was playing my part simply to please Katia. I was nervous all night. Reminiscences of childhood came back to me, and there awoke in my breast a certain yearning for Judaism. To change one's faith! What a tragi-comedy! People talk of it—our good Christian missionaries especially—as if it were to cast off a cloak from one's shoulders. How little they understand human nature! They do not realise that faith, if it only exists, is rooted deep in one's heart, and the one that sometimes extirpates it tears it out often with flesh surrounding it, and the wound keeps on bleeding until there is heart no more.

I arose early Sunday morning with a painful headache; my heart was beating faster than usual and I was very nervous. The morning was particularly bright, and a flood of warmth and sunshine streamed into my room. I dressed myself carefully with trembling hands, putting on my best clothes, though all the while something was twinging at my heart. "Superstition, foolishness," I murmured, and tried to think of Katia, but this brought me no solace, either. I opened several books, but could not read. I opened a volume of Pushkin, glanced at some of his most passionate stanzas, which at

other times had made my blood run warmer, but now they were cold and lifeless to me. I tried to read my favourite poet, Heine, but none of his ballads could hold my mind. When we have too much to think about we cannot think at all. Our thoughts crowd so closely together that we cannot fully grasp a single one.

I waited distractedly for the specified hour. I drew my watch from my pocket, laid it on the table, and looked at its face. How slow its hands crept! I wound it up every quarter of an hour, and wondered how long fifteen minutes was and how long man's life was.

A clock in the neighbourhood struck two; the appointed hour—the hour to wash off my Judaism with a little Christian water—had arrived. I locked the door of my room, put the key into my pocket with a nervous hand, and walked slowly toward the priest's house.

I had to pass the Jewish settlement Libedski. This caused me some uneasiness. I was ashamed of myself and wished I could avoid it, but there was no other way.

An uproar broke upon my ears as I approached Libedski—the wild, boisterous noise of muzhiks in a skirmish. But in the Jewish quarter on Sunday! I wondered, and a sudden fear possessed me. People were running from all sides, and forgetting everything else I ran after them. I soon found myself in the midst of a turbulent mob, jostled and

carried along like a wisp of straw on a flowing stream. The street was filled with gesticulating, brawling peasants, who gave vent to volleys of oaths as only descendants of Tartars know how, and rapaciously attacked Jewish shops and dwellings. Here and there savage-looking muzhiks, with long, unkempt, sandy hair, bloodshot eyes, and disordered dress, shouted and yelled through the windows of wrecked houses like firemen fighting flames. The noises were deafening: the crash of axes mingled with wild shrieks of victory; the ring of crowbars echoed above cries of agony; the clanking of hatchets drowned piercing screams of butchered babes; whoops of triumph swallowed heartrending groans of despair.

"Take care!" bellowed a rioter from a second-story window to the excited crowd below, as he shoved out a long mirror, which appeared in the sun like a sheet of quivering fire. An air-splitting cheer went up as the glass was shattered upon the pavement.

"Stand back!" hoarse voices called from another upper-story window as a piano was forced through. A second later it struck the sidewalk with a resounding crash.

"Catch it! Catch it!" a roaring voice came from a third story, as a screaming babe was swung in the air by its feet.

"Ho! ho! ho! ho!" cheered hundreds from the crowd below. "Throw down the Jewish brat!"

With the exultation of conquest the screeching babe was flung high in the air, like a ball, and it came down upon the pavement with a splash of blood that bespattered the bystanders.

"Comrades, a snow is coming," announced a blood-stained muzhik, with a boisterous laugh, as a large feather-bed was rent in twain and its contents spread to the winds.

"Co-o-old!" jeered the crowd, with feigned chattering of teeth.

"A Jewish frost," a lad wittily exclaimed.

"Make way for the Jew—make way!"

The throng pressed back. Two ruffians dragged an old man by his feet down a high porch and ran through the streets, dragging him after them, the Jew's white hair sweeping the stones of the pavement and painting their sharp edges red with flowing blood.

Some one took notice of a Jewish drinking-place. "Vodka! Ho! ho! ho!—vodka! Ho! ho!" he raised a cry.

Like a bursting dam, the mob rushed upon the dram-shop. "Vodka! Ho! ho! ho!—vodka! Ho! ho! ho!" they yelled, as they attacked the shop and battered its doors and windows.

In a minute the building was wrecked. Casks of *vodka* were broken into splinters and their contents spilled. The strong smell of liquor seemed to stimulate the rapacious crowd. "Ho! ho! vodka! vodka!" The thirsty rioters fell upon the

beverage, fighting fiercely. Some caught a mouthful in the hollow of their hands; many dipped their caps into the broken kegs and drank from their dirty headgear; others pulled off their boots, filled them, and swallowed from their filthy footwear.

I was stunned—paralysed. I could not believe my eyes. This scene in the holiest of Christian cities—in the place of churches and cathedrals! “This must be another lurid dream,” I muttered to myself. But it was real. Above my head was a cloud of dust with flake-like feathers, a vault of smoke with flying sparks; the rattling of smashed windows rang in my ears; thousands of happy Jewish homes were being wrecked and ravished; the air was filled with cries of agony and the clanging of the pillagers’ crowbars; the earth was red with Jewish blood.

And I was on my way to accept the faith of these two-legged beasts! I shuddered.

A frightful shriek made my blood curdle.

“Help! Help!” A girl with dishevelled black hair, with her clothes torn into shreds, rushed from a rich house, pursued by several rioters.

“Ah! ah! ah!” Lusty exclamations came from all sides at the appearance of the maiden.

She was caught and thrown to the ground, struggling for her life, for her honour.

“Stop!” I cried with all my might, and began to pull away the rioters.

They gave me no heed.

"Christians! men! beasts—halt!" I shouted at the top of my voice.

"Kill the Jew!" a cry went up. A number of bystanders dragged me from the assailants, raining blows upon my head.

"Defend your down-trodden people," a voice seemed to call from within me.

Clubs, sticks, iron bars littered the ground. I seized a sharp iron and with all my strength hammered the heads bent over their victim. Some fell bleeding to the ground, while others were fighting to finish their diabolical deed. I brandished the iron right and left, up and down, furiously. "Blood!" I muttered, frantic with the scene before me. I craved to see blood, to wash myself clean with blood, to submerge myself in blood. I struck heads and breasts and shoulders with the rage of a demon, and blood gushed forth abundantly. "Baptise your Jewish soul with blood," a weird-like voice whispered to me. And I did bathe in fresh, hot human blood.

"Soldiers! Cossacks!" rose a cry of warning, as a squad of horsemen came into the street.

"Arrest that Jew!" ordered some one in a shout.

I turned and saw the officer whom I had met at Bialnick's pointing at me.

"Stop that Jew!" he commanded again. But before any one could stop me I fled to the next street.

There the fight was fiercer. Feathers and leaves of books filled the air; porches and balconies fell with explosive roaring; massive furniture came down upon the pavement with thunder-like crashes; on every side were mangled babes, mutilated old Jewish women, aged Jews with crushed limbs and fractured skulls, lacerated girls fighting for their honour. Here and there fashionably dressed Christian women bent down to pick up a piece of precious jewelry or a trinket which the rioters had dropped in their wild excitement.

I stopped before the synagogue. A gang of brutes were forcing an entrance into the house of worship. Its doors were soon stormed, and the crowd burst furiously in. I pressed in after them. Before the ark that contained scrolls of the Torah—the book that inspired prophets and poets and sages—stood an old Jew wrapped in a *Talis*, his arms spread across its portals and begging mercifully:

“Kill me, but save the holy *Torah*.”

“Take him to the gallery!” the one who acted as leader commanded.

With a jubilant shout the struggling old man was raised in the air and carried up to the high gallery.

“Throw him down!” demanded the mob.

“Save the Torah—the holy Torah,” faintly moaned the victim.

“The holy Torah—the holy Torah!” mocked

the rioters; and with a heavy thud the martyr's body struck the floor.

I remembered the iron in my hand. "Blood! blood! blood!" I muttered to myself as the violators began to tear the scrolls of the Torah in strips and trample the parchment under foot. My iron rose and fell mercilessly. I cleared my way until I reached the door. Finding myself outside, I continued the slaughter. But suddenly my eyes dimmed, I became dizzy, and a hot current passed through my body. The iron dropped from my clasp and I raised my hand to my forehead. Something like a drop of boiling water dripped down my nose. I wiped it away, but it dripped faster and faster. Tumult, confusion, shrieking, screaming, begging, imploring . . .

CHAPTER XII

A REACTION

"WHERE am I?" were the first words I uttered when I opened my eyes after the events described in the last chapter.

A young lady who stood at the other end of the room came quickly up to me and murmured: "He is gaining consciousness." Her face seemed familiar, yet I could not recall her.

"Where am I?" I repeated.

"Be at ease, Mr. Russakoff. You are among friends."

I looked around. The room was not mine. My book-case and desk were missing, and there were three windows here, while mine had only two. On a small table near the bed on which I lay stood little flasks of medicine. I must have been sick, I thought.

I tried to collect my thoughts, but my memory was absolutely blank. I looked now at the woman, now at the drugs, but soon I felt a pain in my head and became half-unconscious. Flying stones, babes hurled in the air, a sweet-faced young girl in a blue dress with a golden crucifix dangling over her bosom, fire, smoke, blood—a lot of blood—a big

pool in which I swam up to my neck—and all was blank again.

The next time I opened my eyes I found Mr. Levinski and his wife—I now recognised the young woman I had seen before—seated at my side. She was standing with a small flask and a teaspoon in her hand.

“How do you feel, Mr. Russakoff?” Levinski asked.

“I feel no pain,” I answered. “What happened to me? Tell me, please.”

“I’ll tell you when you get a little stronger. The physician forbade us to disturb you in the least.”

His wife gave me a spoonful of the liquid from the flask. I lay there for some time, gazing at the ceiling, and trying to recall what had occurred before I fell sick.

Next morning I felt stronger and again asked Levinski to tell me what had happened.

“Can’t you wait a little longer?” he coaxed me.

“But the anxiety makes me more restless,” I urged him.

“Well,” he said, and sighed, “you will recall the riot in the Jewish quarter about two months ago [two months, did he say?], on May 18th [my mind began to clear up]. I was invited to dinner that day with our editor-in-chief, and we were leisurely enjoying our time over a cigar when the tumult of the rioters reached us. The first thing that occurred to my mind was the possible

danger of my uncle and his daughter, who lived in Libedski. He kept a jewelry store and lived above it. When I reached the place I found everything destroyed and plundered, and in the gutter in front of it I noticed you lying senseless and bleeding [my memory now became clearer]. Fortunately, the soldiers and officers, who at first helped the mob to plunder and rob, kept them back now. Doctor Mandel, a friend of mine, came up with an ambulance. I left you in his care and went in search of my uncle and his daughter. I found the girl in an unconscious condition in the hallway." Levinski put his handkerchief to his face, but his voice betrayed that there were tears in his eyes.

"You can imagine my feelings when I looked at my cousin thus violated. Through the assistance of Doctor Mandel she gained consciousness and began to cry for her father. This reminded me of my uncle, and we went to search for him. We looked through the house, but he was not there. The furniture was demolished, and his books—for he had a valuable library—were stolen and some were torn leaf from leaf. Finally we found him lying in the back yard with a fractured skull. He had died long before we had arrived.

"I could see that the girl's condition was critical. When she gained consciousness she told how her father had met his fate. Learning that the mob was plundering downstairs, they locked themselves in a dark room on the second floor, hoping to save

their lives. But after the mob had finished their diabolical work downstairs they broke into the rooms upstairs and attacked the door of the room where they were hidden. It was forced open and the girl was assaulted. She and her father were armed with knives, but what could weak creatures like them do?"

Levinski paused here and openly broke into tears.

"The ravagers succeeded in wresting the poor child from her father's arms, and violated her while he was wrestling with the rioters who held him back. Then they flung him through the window, and the girl succeeded in rushing downstairs. But they caught her in the hallway and attacked her again."

A vague recollection of the situation in which I found the girl was now coming back to me.

"How is the girl?" I asked after a short pause.

"She stabbed herself in the abdomen while being ravished, and she died from the wound the next day," Levinski said, and sobbed again.

After a while he said to me: "Where in the world did you secrete yourself after Razovski's arrest? I inquired for you at your old lodgings, but was informed that you had moved. I went around to most of your friends, but none of them seemed to know where you had gone. I wrote to the publisher of the magazine to which you had contributed, but he replied that he had heard nothing of you for

some time. I came to the conclusion that you had fallen into the snares of the police."

This brought to my mind my engagement to Katia, and her sweet face came before my eyes. At this recollection I grew dizzy.

"Do you feel any pain?" Levinski asked me anxiously.

"None," I said. "I will tell you of my disappearance some time when I am stronger. But tell me, how did the riot start?"

"After the riot broke out in Yeliswetgrad, if you remember that, a rumour was circulated that a similar outbreak was going to take place here on May 3d. We sent a delegation to the Mayor and asked him to station soldiers in the most thickly populated Jewish streets, but he bluntly replied: 'I would not trouble the soldiers for a pack of Jews.' However, the riot did not occur on the day expected, but on the next Sunday.

"I was a dreamer. We were all dreamers who thought we had become citizens of Russia. Yes, we are only stepchildren in every country, after all, and we very seldom find a kind-hearted stepmother to take care of us. Always sneered at, scolded, cursed, persecuted, beaten, whether we commit a fault or achieve the heroic. To please the Christian nations, we ought to, as Fichte says, cut off our Jewish heads and put on Christian ones; and I scarcely believe even that would be sufficient.

"Yes, I was dreaming. But the stones hurled at

the windows of the Jewish quarter, the burning roofs over the heads of my brethren, the cry of agony of the wretched dwellers of Libedski—these awakened me. The dream is over.”

He sat in gloomy silence for a minute, then broke out bitterly: “In what deception and delusion I have lived for the past ten years! I dreamed that Russia was my fatherland; I fancied that we also had a share in her culture and progress; I imagined that bigotry and superstition had died out with the last generation; I persuaded myself that Russia would give us equal rights if we would only seek for them. Had I no cause to think so? Was there no Jewish blood shed on the battle-field of Plevna? Is not the State treasury filled with gold from the burdensome taxes imposed upon our race? Have we not contributed our share to her literature? Did we not give them a Rubenstein, a pianist and composer the semibarbaric people would never have produced? Is not the greatest Russian sculptor, of whom his stepmother is at present so boastful—is not he a Jew? These thoughts made me feel secure, and I went to sleep and dreamed of a golden age.”

He spoke furiously; his eyes flashed through their tears.

“Yes, I awoke! Russia is my fatherland no longer. I can’t stay in this country. I expect to leave Europe and all Christian nations forever. The nations that teach love in the name of the

crucified Jew do not practise it. They never practise it. The Crusaders, the *auto-da-fe*, the Russian knout, the German press—they are all pursuing the same end in the name of Christian brotherhood. I shall flee to my Uncle Ishmael and seek protection under him. He does not preach much, and this leaves him more time to practise.”

“I do not understand you,” I interrupted him. “Do you intend to go to Turkey?”

“You have been ill for the last few months, so you do not know what is going on among us now. There is a movement among the Jews to go back and colonise Palestine. A great number of Jewish students of Kieff and Kharkoff have abandoned their studies and will sail in a few weeks for Palestine. I subscribed to this league, too. Enough of this European civilisation! Back to our ancient fatherland, where our prophets saw celestial visions and preached peace; where David poured forth his heavenly psalms; where the earth was once saturated with the blood of the Maccabeans; where the precious relics of our history are entombed. I shall be happy to put on the Arab’s robe and turban and till the ground of my ancestors. No more dreaming—I have awakened at last.”

Thus spoke Levinski, who had been an ardent believer in assimilation two months before. I could hardly believe my ears; I thought I must be still delirious.

I stared at him and murmured: “Palestine—

Palestine. So you are dreaming again. You commence to believe in the Messiah."

"No, no; this is no dream. I do not believe in the Messiah, as some of the narrow-minded Jews do—in one who will rush down from heaven riding on a white ass and proclaim his lordship; but I do believe in a political Messiah who will emancipate the Jews. History points clearly in that direction. Neither fire nor sword, neither the poignant pen nor the barbaric knout could annihilate the indestructible Jew. Whenever any grave disaster has happened to Israel, relief has come from some place. In Egypt, Moses arose; later, when the entire extermination of the race was threatened, the Maccabees sprang up; in the same year that the Jews were expelled from Spain, Columbus, as if through the dispensation of Providence, discovered America—a place of refuge for the ever-persecuted race. Can any one be blind to facts? Can any skeptic deny the providential course of history? However rational we might be, can we for a moment doubt that we are the chosen people of God? Can any other nation, modern or ancient, boast of such a glorious record as that of Israel? Is it not nobler to be downtrodden than to tread upon others? Is it not more heroic to be burned at the stake than to add fagots to the blaze? Our lot has always been that of martyrs. We witnessed the rise and downfall of Babylon; we outlived artistic Greece; we survived the Roman warriors; we shall yet see the

downfall of Spain; and we shall yet experience the collapse of all nations that inhumanly oppress us. You stare at me, Mr. Russakoff; you can hardly believe your ears; but it is the same Levinski that is talking to you. I was dreaming; I have awakened at last."

Thus the enthusiast indulged in new, pleasant dreams. I listened in amazement, and wondered what a productive race of dreamers Israel is!

As soon as I was strong enough to walk about the house I began to worry about the future. The remembrance of Katia was as sweet as ever to me, but with the thought of her came the thought of baptism, and that prostrated my mind. My conscience and self-esteem as a born Jew aroused by the recent massacre revolted against my love. I hesitated whether or not to go back to her.

How strangely people often act! What would I not have done for Katia's sake two months before? And now, when my road was so smooth, without the least obstacle, I thought of giving up the loveliest and most charming girl on account of a little cold water. True, the world calls it changing one's faith, but is it not in reality only deceiving a narrow-minded priest? True, the world condemns and despises one who goes through this ceremony without being in earnest about it, but do not men in more ways than this deceive others in the pursuits of life? Do not writers every day, in newspapers, magazines, and voluminous books, misrepresent

themselves and express ideas they do not themselves believe? Do not politicians who are respected and honoured in our community, and whose praises are perpetuated in verse—do not these political schemers advocate principles solely for their own benefit? What difference is there between one who misrepresents his ideas or belief for a million, and the poor man, whose stomach pains from hunger, who lets himself be sprinkled with a little cold water by some priest for a few dollars? Is not love the most divine and the purest sentiment that can prompt one to deceive a bigoted priest? In doing this one does not trifle with God, but merely exposes a foolish priest to the ridicule of the wise. Never in his life did the witty Heine play a greater satirical prank on Christendom than by his baptism.

Finally I decided to go and see Katia. I inquired of Levinski, who was on friendly terms with Judge Bialnick, about the latter.

“Judge Bialnick?” he said. “No one knows where he is.”

“What has happened to him?”

“He was arrested immediately after the riots and——”

“And was sent to Siberia?” I struck in fearfully.

“No; he managed to escape, and I was told he is with his daughter either in France or Switzerland.”

CHAPTER XIII

I BID FAREWELL TO MY FATHERLAND

IN a short time I recovered entirely from my illness; only a scar across my forehead and right eye was left to remind me of my injuries. I was low-spirited most of the time, and stayed in the Jewish settlement. "The stone which I recently despised became the headstone of the corner." I felt like the prodigal son returned to his father. Again there was a yearning in my heart for the Ghetto, surrounded by high, dingy walls, with a heavy gate; again there was in my heart a craving desire for the Beth-Hamedrash, with its hot oven, by which I could sit among my honest people and brood over a folio of Talmud. I also had dreamed, for a certainty. And that day had awakened me, too.

In the beginning of August—or, according to the Jewish calendar, the night of Tisha-B'Ab—I strolled sadly, with a drooped head, through the Jewish quarter. Old-fashioned Jews with long beards and scrawny faces, and stooped Jewesses with tears on their wrinkled cheeks, wended their course toward the synagogue. I had not been in a synagogue for nearly six years, and now something like an

invisible string, attached somewhere within me, drew me close to my brethren, from whom I had so long kept at a distance.

The synagogue was full. The benches of the house of worship were piled up in a corner, and in lieu of them boards were laid on the floor. Upon these boards the whole congregation sat, shoeless. Each one held a tallow candle that shed a dim light over their Kinos (Book of Lamentations). It was not illumined except by these candles, which appeared like so many blinking stars.

That Tisha-B'Ab the persecuted people had an abundance of tears to shed. The third temple—the temple of hope—was destroyed. There were strange visitors in the congregation that night—doctors, lawyers, professors, university and gymnasium students in their fine uniforms and with cockades in their hats, all of whom had probably not visited a synagogue since their early childhood.

Side by side sat the bearded orthodox Jew and the clean-shaven lawyer and perfumed student, reading Jeremiah's "Lamentations" and shedding bitter tears in commemoration of the destruction of their nationality thousands of years ago.

I took off my shoes and joined the weeping chorus. Everybody cried—men, women, and children—like vagrant orphans who bewailed their parents. My eyes were blurred with tears. I could follow the Kinos no further. The letters in the book before me were run together in a large

inky blot, and the light of the candles around me shone on my tearful eyes like numberless beams at sunrise.

The Chazan, a gray old man, burst into a tearful voice: "She dwelleth among the heathen; she findeth no rest; all her persecutors overtook her between two streets."

They were the words of the prophet more than two thousand years ago. They rang in my ears as if Jeremiah were sitting to-day by the ruins of Jerusalem pouring forth lamentation for the bitter lot of his people. Thoughts and images crowded my mind. Soon the whole congregation, with the burning candles, became to my eyes a vast black spot studded with golden nails. The hundreds of wailing voices sounded to me like a waterfall rolling over a dam and opposed by a wailing wind. I gazed abstractedly until the Chazan awakened me again. "They ravished the women in Zion and the maidens in the city of Judah—the crown is fallen from our heads; woe unto us that we have sinned! For this our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim."

These words opened fresh wounds in the breasts of the audience. The whole congregation broke into one great groan that rose higher and higher, till it seemed that the very walls of the synagogue moaned in sympathy with my afflicted people.

About a week later the Zion League, which

consisted of a large number of students, young doctors and lawyers, journalists and engineers, left for Palestine to establish colonies there and prepare for the coming Messiah.

I, however, decided to try some country of western Europe. I packed up my belongings, and in the same month bade farewell to the land that gave me life and sought to extinguish it. While I sat in the car that crossed the Russian frontier, and looked without, thick volumes of smoke issued from the engine-stack and rolled over the vast stretches of stubble-fields and stacks of reaped rye, wheat, and straw. I looked gloomily through the car-window as we traversed woods and forests, flying swiftly across bridges, and allowing me only a glimpse of the waters below and of the broad expanse of Russian territory. I gazed wistfully at the varying panorama through which I sped, and my heart throbbed wildly at the thought that it might be my last look at Russia. No matter how cruelly I had been treated in that land, it was the land in which I roamed barefoot in my childhood, and was ever to be remembered with yearning.

As the train hurried toward the German frontier I continued to look through the window, which was frequently clouded with a blast of black smoke, and I thought of Litwinoff, one of Turgenieff's creations: "*All is but smoke and vapour; everything is constantly changing; one shape dissolves itself into another, one event succeeds another, but*

in reality everything remains the same. There is much stir and confusion, but all these clouds vanish at last without leaving any trace, without having accomplished anything. The winds change their direction; they pass to the other side and there continue their feverish and fruitless motion."

"Smoke, smoke—smoke and vapour," I muttered to myself. "Smoke, smoke, and nothing but smoke and vapour."

BOOK THE THIRD

LIBERTY

“And strangers shall stand and feed their flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughman and your vine-dresser.”—ISAIAH.

CHAPTER I

IN THE LAND OF LIBERTY

EVERY person's life would make an interesting story if the narrator only knew which portions to tell and which to omit. In this truism will be found my reason for omitting a detailed account of the two years following my departure from my native soil. Like a restless spirit I wandered from city to city, from country to country, with no definite purpose in view. I travelled through Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, England. I tried hard to forget the past—root it out of my memory—but one face remained ever vivid before me. I searched, I inquired, but I sought in vain for my heart's desire.

One fine frosty morning found me on the deck of a steamer gently beating the waves of New York Bay and slowly moving toward the land of liberty. The deck was spotted with patches of ice, which cracked under the tread of the throng of steerage passengers as they moved about impatiently, shivering with cold. My fellow immigrants were a quaint and picturesque mixture of people—blond, flabby Germans; dark Jews with faces that bespoke starvation; coarse, swarthy Slavonians; delicate, dark-

brown Frenchmen; mothers with babes at their breasts or with toddling youngsters clinging to their skirts. There was a large number of Russian Jews who had fled from the yoke of tyranny and were now coming to kiss the soil of liberty. There were all sorts of Russian Jews—old, stooped, hoary Jews, with shaggy beards and shabby garments; handsomely built students with nothing Jewish about them but thoughtful eyes and the indellible stamp of persecution; faded, decrepit, heavily bewigged Jewesses, with faces that told tragic tales; and healthy, cheerful young maidens, who probably expected to find suitors in America—all coming to the Promised Land with hungry stomachs, empty pockets, and heads full of hopes and projects.

As the steamer approached Castle Garden, the passengers, with bundles in their hands, anxiously gazed toward the shore. The impatience of the crowd grew every moment. The climax of their excitement was reached when the boat was being moored. Handkerchiefs were waved from the dock, and those on deck who recognised friends among the waiting crowd exchanged cries of greeting with them. Leaning against the railing, my head full of strange thoughts, I looked jealously at my fellow passengers. Everybody came to acquaintances, friends, relations, but there was nobody to receive me—nobody to send me a shout of welcome. I was again alone, again a vagrant orphan without a

friend in the world. I thrust my hands into my pockets—I had only six dollars and thirty-two cents.

After a few minutes we began to pour out of the steamer. Leaving the barge office, I stood in the street with my knapsack in my hand. "Where shall I go?" I asked myself. I knew no one in the new land, and my knowledge of English, though not very meager, was not quite sufficient to make me feel at home. After short reflection I decided to repair to the Jewish quarter. Instinctively I sought the poor Jewish settlement near the heart of the city, in the main business portion.

I inquired in the best English I could command for the quarter, but every one I accosted answered as he hurried on: "Go straight ahead until you reach it." Some other Jewish immigrants, with Americanised friends who had come to receive them, walked ahead of me, so I surmised their destination must be the same as mine, and I surrendered myself to their guidance.

Dirty urchins ran hooting after the Jewish "greenhorns," shouting "Sheeny," "Solomon Ikey," and other epithets, which I divined from the tone and action of the youngsters to be intended for insults. Stones were hurled at us; one dropped in front of me. "I must be dreaming of Kieff," I thought with a shudder. But it was in the great city of New York—the metropolis of the land of liberty. I tried to solace myself with the thought that the little gamins were mocking the immigrants

because of their foreign costumes and appearance, but I wondered why the people across the street, the Germans and the Slavonians, just as shabby as the poor Jews, were not molested.

That was my first discouragement. I slackened my pace as if regretting my step, and walked slowly, absorbed in new anxieties.

However, there was now no turning back. At length I found myself in the Jewish settlement. I then had no further need for inquiry. The muddy, murky, filthy streets; the squalid tenement blocks, with bedclothes on fire-escapes and various Hebrew signs dangling beneath them; stooped and sallow-faced creatures with a "hurry-up" expression in every feature; the fruit-sellers and fishmongers and hawkers of suspenders and handkerchiefs crying their merchandise—all these proclaimed to me that I had arrived in a new Ghetto. It reminded me of Vilno. It was Friday, too, I remembered.

I wandered about aimlessly for an hour or more, and finally I reached the corner of Hester and Ludlow Streets. The scene made me pause.

There were thousands of people, and everybody was selling something. The sidewalks, or the planks that served as sidewalks, were decayed; there might have been a pavement years ago, but now the thoroughfare was slushy, and there was a sound like kneading dough as the crowd jostled hither and thither. Some blessed and some cursed, some laughed and some cried, some shrieked and

some grunted—but all in a brotherly and frank manner. What a variety of voices! Small, piping, baby voices; healthy, sweet contralto voices; sour, quarrelling voices; soft, plaintive voices; harsh, guttural, disagreeable voices. What types of faces and what fashions of dress! Aged, decrepit Jews with maps of Jerusalem (at the time of the destruction) on their faces; fresh, blooming faces marred only by merciless poverty and suffering; worn-out women with wrinkled cheeks and withered bodies; and young women with lustrous black hair and sparkling eyes for which Fifth Avenue ladies would have gladly exchanged their jewels.

I looked at this curious and pathetic scene. "This misery is the work of cruel persecution," I murmured to myself. Jewesses with shrivelled faces and dim, once-brilliant eyes, carrying big baskets on their arms, passed me and murmured mechanically in plain Russian-Yiddish and in pitiful tones: "Reb Yid [Mr. Jew], buy something. Everything cheap, almost for nothing."

A gray-bearded Jew, wrapped up in a big ulster, and with a pair of old Russian boots on his feet, rubbed his hands and begged in a poverty-stricken voice: "Good health to you, Reb Yid. Buy a comb below cost—so may the One above help me!"

Then I heard a voice that made me turn around and stare. "Women! women! candles for Shabbos! Six for five cents—for Shabbos!"

The candle-vender was a tall man with a white

beard, dressed in a threadbare coat that had once been of good quality, and a costly Russian fur hat that betrayed long wear. From his shoulder hung a box by a strap. "Women! candles for Shabbos! Six for five cents—for Shabbos!" he repeated automatically

I observed him closely. "Is it possible—Mr. Takiff?" I asked myself incredulously.

He seemed to feel my scrutiny and raised his eyes. His face was marred by deep furrows of sorrow, and his eyes looked melancholy.

"Mr. Takiff?" I said.

He looked at me studiously. "Israel?" he answered hesitatingly.

I nodded my head; I was overwhelmed with emotion.

"Mr. Takiff?" I repeated.

"Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me," he answered in the words of Naomi, shaking my hand affectionately.

"How long have you been here?" he questioned.

I told him.

He quickly thrust his merchandise into his box and said: "Come to my house. She will be glad to see you."

I divined who "she" was.

"Do not trouble yourself on my account. I do not want you to lose to-day's profit," I urged.

"Let the whole business go to blazes!" he answered

bitterly. "I stay here all day and make thirty or forty cents, and sometimes I must give away half of my profit to that tall policeman, who often threatens to make me move. This is American business," he added with a sigh.

"How delighted I am to see you, my good Israel!" he said with manifest pleasure, as we pressed through the busy crowd. "You will excuse me for calling you Israel; in America you will be Mister," he explained ironically. "Oh, *she* will be so pleased to see you!" he repeated without mentioning her name. "We are not far from my home; we live on Ludluff [Ludlow] Street."

"Here we are," he said a few minutes later, stopping before a dingy, five-story tenement house. "We live high up—on the fourth."

The entrance was filthy and reeky; the stench almost stopped my breathing. An old hag, her withered breast bare and a dilapidated wig cocked on one side, sat on the first step of the rickety flight of stairs, with her mouth wide open and her hands supporting her head. She stared idiotically in front of her, without looking at anything in particular. She did not move aside or budge when we walked up the staircase. I observed that her eyes did not wink or stir when we passed by her; they were like those of a mummy.

The stairs were narrow, and the baluster was so nasty that I could not lay my hands on it. When

we reached the top of the first flight the old man groaned. I was also tired.

At the top of the second flight he groaned again, spat, and muttered something to himself.

We mounted the stairs of the next story, picking our way through the children that obstructed the way. My aged companion muttered something like a curse between his teeth. The door of one of the apartments on this floor opened and a young woman protruded her tousled head and called: "Yankele, where are you? A cholera into your bones! It is Friday, and he does not mind it at all. Quick—fetch me two cents' worth of pepper and raisins and a penny's worth of almonds."

Finally we reached the fourth floor. The gray-headed Mr. Takiff burst out: "Let the devil take the American stairs! They take my breath away." He tried to open one of the several doors in the dark hall. It was locked. "She must have gone out. We'll go into my sister's until she gets back."

He knocked at the other door on the same floor. "Gittele, we have a guest. Can you recognise him?" he said to the woman who responded to his knock.

I recognised her instantly. She was the same Gittele I had seen years before, buxom and healthy, but her face bore the marks of suffering.

She looked at me and smiled, saying she could not recall me. When my host told her who I was she seemed delighted at seeing me again.

"Are you long from home [meaning Russia]?"

I told her how long.

"Blessed are those who know not of this cursed land!" she said with a sigh. "At home we were somebody. Every one knew of us and we [she always spoke for her husband, too] lived in comfort; but here—would that Columbus had never been born, so that we had been spared from coming to this land of rigorous service! Woe to Reb Dovidle, at whose table every needy person found food and assistance!

"On Friday night," she continued plaintively, "my *baal-bos* never 'made Kiddush' without three strangers at the table. And in this cursed America, woe to us what we have come to! My husband has a little tailor shop and Yankil, Beril, and Shmeril [Yiddish equivalent for Tom, Dick, and Harry] are his equals! Well, the dollar is their god in this country, and people are estimated by their bank accounts, not by their real value. Talking between ourselves"—this in a lower voice, as if she feared to be overheard by somebody—"who came over to this country from Russia before the 'riots'? Any fine people? Any educated or learned Jews? None but shoemakers, tailors, water-carriers, 'Nicholas' soldiers, and some with prison badges on their backs. Now these people are presidents in synagogues, and they have the *matbaeh* [coin]. As the saying goes, he who has the *matbaeh* has the *daeh* [say]. Woe is me"—she suddenly checked

herself—"while emptying my bitter heart I forgot to offer the guest a glass of tea. No doubt you're hungry," and she hurried to the adjoining room.

While his sister was thus "emptying her bitter heart" Mr. Takiff continually shook his bowed head.

In the meantime I cast a glance about the house. There were only three rooms. The one we sat in was the kitchen and dining-room, the furniture of which consisted of a small table covered with oilcloth, a stove near the sink, dish-shelves on which I noticed a samovar and six candlesticks; on the walls were a picture of the President of the United States at an inauguration, and certificates of several lodges, to which, I presumed, the head of the family belonged. The room, though small, was neat and tidy.

"Make yourself at home, Mr. Russakoff," Gittele said to me, returning with a white cloth, which she laid on the table. "My brother's guest is also my guest; and besides, we are old friends, too."

She poured out tea for me, remarking: "American tea! Does it have any taste or flavour? I brought a samovar from home, but where can you get the proper coals in this country, and who has the time to bother with it? My husband advised me not to bring it here at all, but I could not part with it; we had three, and I sold the others. I also brought a *Shaas* [the Talmud], but who gives a glance into the Talmud in this *treif* America?

There it lies packed up over my bed. At home my children would be rabbis, perhaps, but here—oi and woe is me!—no one cares for such things. My children do not want to answer in Yiddish when I talk to them—nothing but English.

“No use talking,” she resumed while I was drinking tea. “In America everything is treif—the very water we drink is treif, and who talks of meat? Only the other day it was discovered that our butcher used to sell treif meat for kosher! Well, how can one live in such a land? At home we suffered, but we had hopes for Gan-Eden. But here everything is forfeited, and we have to roast some day in the blazes of hell like the wicked.” Here she sighed deeply, as if she beheld the rising flames before her. “And our children will not even say Kaddish after our death, and all our labour will be wasted.”

She recited her monologue uninterrupted, while I partook of the bread, cheese, and butter that she had set before me. “America!” she proceeded after a short pause. “Does any one live here as at home? Everybody is labouring in sweat for a mean, scanty living. At home I had two Jewish servant girls and a gentile girl, and I was a lady; while here I work and scrub the floors like a prisoner in Siberia—*Shone Zion* [enemies of Zion—idiotic—would that Israel’s enemies were in such condition]. At home we had fine furniture, and

here all we have is a bureau and that old *washington* [wash-stand].”

“Let us go to the front room,” said Mr. Takiff after I had finished eating. “We will talk over old stories until ‘she’ comes.”

We went to the parlour, or front room, as they called it. Besides a folding-bed there were a set of second-hand plush-covered furniture, a small case crammed with books, and an old organ.

We sat down. A short pause ensued. I could see that he wished to tell me about Malke, so I waited for him to begin.

“She will be so glad to see you,” he repeated again. “My sister grumbles all the time, but I bear my wounds silently.” He was approaching the subject gently, I observed. His careworn face showed inner grief.

“It would be a sin for me to complain. I have to praise the Lord for His favours to me in my old age. Why should I bewail my lost wealth, so long as I have saved my daughter? Her name here is Regina Wigodski. Yes, I wrested her from that scoundrel’s hands,” he said to me as if he were talking to himself. “He threatened to shoot me; he even aimed at me. But what a foolish count! I would rather have the bullet pierce my brain than leave her in his house. But I saved her. I found out that she was with him on his estate near Mohilev. I went there about a month after you left us. His servants would not let me in. But I got in. He

stood in the veranda of his palace and set his dogs on me, but they only tore my clothes and bruised my hand here." He showed me a deep scar. "But I did get into his palace in spite of all his threats. I implored him to give me back my daughter, and fell on my knees before him. I kissed his boots, but he only kicked me. He threatened to throw me out of his inn and ruin me. 'Malke, my daughter!' I cried with all my voice, so she could not help hearing me. He ordered his servants to throw me out. They beat me, they flogged me, they almost crushed me. But I heard somebody weeping in an adjoining room. I knew her voice. I knew she would come back to me; I was certain that now she must come. So I waited. I knew she would come, and come she did.

"It was in the middle of winter. I had neglected my business and the inn was less frequented, for I was practically alone and could not attend to it. My wife had died just a week before." This last he said as if in answer to my inquisitive look. "Late one night I was sitting alone in the house. My little boy was asleep. Snow had drifted around the inn as high as the window-sills and a storm was raging. I sat by the hot oven warming myself and looking into a book, though my thoughts were far away. My wife's ghost—peace be with her!—had come to me in a dream the night before and said: 'Nosen, Malke is coming home; forgive her.' I was thinking about this, when I thought the latch of

the door clicked. It must be caused by the wind, I decided. A few minutes later the latch clicked again, as if some one were trying to lift it. The blasts of the wind made frightful noises, as if they were going to upset the inn. Then everything was quiet for a minute or so. I closed my book and paced up and down the room. I heard something bump up against the door. I hurried to the door and opened it. A figure lay prostrate before me. I fetched the lamp and looked at it. I need not tell you the rest. She had returned to the God of Israel."

He heaved a deep sigh and proceeded:

"That scoundrel took the inn away from me and ruined me, as he had threatened to do, but I was prepared for it. I sold out what little was left me and sailed for America. I left my son with a wealthy brother of mine in Kovno. At home it would be hard for her to get married, I thought, so I decided to come to this country. I am not sorry for it.

"Coming over here I had a little money yet, and I did not let her go to work in a shop. I peddled and made my three or four dollars a week. But she insisted on going to work, and she found a place in a shirt factory, where she made the acquaintance of Mr. Wigodski, whom she married a year ago. He is also a student from home, and he expects to take up a profession after a while."

As he finished tears were rolling down his wrinkled

face, but I could not tell whether they were tears of joy or grief.

The door opened and a middle-aged man with a black beard and a jovial face entered. I recognised him—the same Reb Dovidle I had met six years before. He was not as well dressed as he was then, and hard work had made deep marks in his countenance.

“Well, Gittele, God be praised!” he said in Yiddish to his wife. “Business is improving from day to day.”

He took off his stiff hat, put on his skull-cap, and came into the “front room.”

“You are home early to-day, Nosen. Oh, I see, you’ve found an old friend. *Sholom-Aleichem*.” He stretched out his hand to me cordially. “I can always tell a ‘greener’ as soon as I look at him,” he added, without waiting for a formal introduction. “Any news in Russia? How is the treatment of the Jews? As severe as ever?” and added a few more questions without giving me a chance to reply to the first.

“Do you recognise him, David?” (Dovidle being a diminutive of David) asked Mr. Takiff.

He shrugged his shoulders, and the smile that spread over his face plainly signified “no.”

“Israel—a—Russ——” his brother-in-law tried to help him out. (I had adopted the second name of my Russian passport.)

He shook his head negatively.

"I had the pleasure of eating at your table one Friday night," I struck in.

At my remark his countenance beamed with gratification. "Many ate at my table at home," he said, nodding his head with a touch of pride.

I recalled to his mind the occasion on which I had profited by his hospitality.

A little later I told them that, much as I appreciated their kindness, I would not intrude on them longer, but would go at once and look for lodgings.

"Really, you must think we came from Sodom or Gemoro," said Gittele, with just a little bit of indignation in her voice. "Do you think we will let you go away Erev-Shabbos? We are just as good Jews here as we were at home."

"Why, you don't know anybody else here in America," put in Mr. Takiff. "Stay here over Shabbos, and Sunday I will find you a lodging."

This Ghetto life appeared very strange to me after I had been away from it so long. I had come to dislike it—at times I even detested it. Yet now I found it pleasant; their friendly talk, their cordial welcome, their sincere hospitality warmed my forlorn heart.

"That's my daughter," Mr. Takiff said a few minutes later, when we heard footsteps in the hall.

He opened the door and called, and the next instant the same Malke stood before me—the same brunette with the same large, pensive, dark' eyes, with the same warm colour that spoke of life and

passion. Only she was a trifle stouter, and there was a look in her eyes that told of experience.

“Do you know this gentleman?” her father asked, glancing from her to me.

She blushed and stretched out her hand. “Israel,” she said in a very low voice. The same sweet voice, but with a slight note of sorrow in it.

We did not refer to old Dubrooka days; we only spoke of the present and future.

CHAPTER II

SHMUNKE MENKE SHMUNKE'S

THIS is my third birth, I said to myself that night as I tossed sleeplessly from side to side. I was a babe again. My proficiency in languages, my literary skill, my ideas—none of these was of avail to me here. Again I was babbling the Jewish jargon as in the beginning of my miserable childhood; again an orphan—without a fatherland—a wanderer, a vagabond in a strange land. I had to start life anew from its very beginning. Again I was in the Ghetto I so much despised. It seemed that the Ghetto was foreordained for me. In vain had I struggled to free myself from it; futile had been my strenuous efforts to break away from the narrow confinement of the Jewry. By a force stronger than my will I was drawn back to it.

Mr. Takiff found me lodgings with a family that he said he had known in Russia, and on the following Sunday morning I climbed the four flights of dirty stairs that led to my new home and knocked gently at the door.

It opened, and a heavily bewigged woman, with long earrings dangling down her cheeks, thrust out

her head and asked in Yiddish: "Well, what do you want?"

I retreated a step in surprise. Instead of announcing myself as her new lodger, I asked: "If you please, aren't you from Javolin?"

"Where should I come from if not from Javolin?" she answered with a question.

"Is not your name Groone?" I ventured to ask again, smiling at the grimace on her face.

"What, then, is my name—Sprinze?" she flung another question instead of a reply, and swung the door as if to give me a hint.

"And your husband's name is Menke," I continued tantalisingly, holding the door to keep her from shutting it in my face.

"What, then, should his name be—Todres?" came another interrogation, quick as lightning. Then she added: "I don't understand you, young man. My father was just as nice a man as yours, and don't you come to insult me in my own house."

"Don't you know me, Groone?" I smiled, moving a little forward.

My tone seemed to have gained favour, for she said with rather less sharpness: "Where do you come from?"

I thought this enough dilly-dallying and told her who I was.

"God be with you! Come in, Reb Israel, come in. Who would have ever believed that you would grow so tall and nice—and in America! *Ach, mein Gott!*

You also in America! Tell me, Reb Israel, how do you come to this country?"

"I could not come by rail, so I came by boat," I answered, with rather a weak attempt at humour.

"Upon my word, the same Israel, with the same old jokes. When did you get here?"

I told her.

"Did you leave your wife and children at home?"

I said I had neither.

"Upon my word in honour, you're making fun of me. How is it without a wife?" she asked incredulously.

"But why am I standing here?" she said before I could answer. "Such a guest! and I do not so much as invite you to a glass of tea. Would you not have a 'warm glass'? Do have a glass of tea, and don't stand on any ceremonies."

I had great difficulty in declining this invitation. "How does a person refuse a glass of tea? How is it that a Jew doesn't drink a glass of tea? When does a person not want a glass of tea? How is it possible? If it won't do any good it surely won't do any harm? What will you lose by it? Do you call this a treat? One comes into a friend's house, he drinks a glass of tea. How is it without a glass of tea? An old friend comes in, and there! he won't taste a little cold water. How can a person say he doesn't want any tea? One drinks."

With these and like arguments I was assailed,

and would perhaps have surrendered had not Menke fortunately come in.

"S-h!" Groone warned me, then folded her hands in maternal easiness. "Menke, will you recognise this young man?"

Menke remained standing as if suddenly pushed under a shower-bath, with a half-idiotic smile on his face, his "American hat" a trifle inclined to one side.

"I do remember him, but I can't recall his name," he stammered in his nasal voice, shrugging his shoulders.

"Then say you don't know him," his spouse burst out. "Why are you chewing and pretending that you do know him? Long shall live this head!" She patted her wig with her hand. "The moment he opened the door I cried out 'Israel!'"

Menke was abashed at this; he continued to look at me with a perplexed and foolish smile.

"Why don't you give him *Sholom-Aleichem*? Would that I may have sorrows in plagues in my house if he recognised him now, either"; and then she added metaphorically: "If you will put your fingers into his mouth he will not bite them off. Don't you remember Israel, who had lodgings with us in Javolin?"

"The one which Rabbi Brill—a——"

Groone gave him a look that would have scared any one.

But I came to his relief and finished the sentence.

"Yes, the one whom Rabbi Brill expelled from the Yeshiva."

Then Groone told me how they happened to be in this country. It was all on account of Shmunke. He was called to the army because the death of an older brother by her husband's first wife was not recorded, and he was therefore alive as far as the Government was concerned, and hence Shmunke was not the oldest and was obliged to serve the Czar five years. Groone said she would rather go to America than to see Shmunke wearing a military uniform, and so they sold their hut and sailed for the "golden land," where she hoped her son would become a rabbi. But as Groone expressed it: "A man thinks and God blinks."

As I was talking with these people, or rather as Groone talked and we listened, the door opened and a tall, bony fellow, smooth-shaven, with glasses on his nose, came in, and without looking at us passed through the room into the next one.

"Shmunke!" Groone called after him.

"I have told you a million times," the young man said, turning about, "that my name is Dzames, and don't you call me by your dirty *sheeny* names." And he disappeared wrathfully into the adjoining room.

"That is America for you!" Groone nodded her head and waved her hand toward Shmunke, and Menke puffed at his pipe indifferently. "'At home' Rabbi Brill consulted him whenever he had

a knotty point in the Talmud, and here he would throw stones at a Jew. Oi and woe is me what I have lived to see!"

"What are you jabbering there?" Shmunke appeared in the doorway with a sneer on his face. "Your Jewish nonsense over again? How many times have I told you to leave me out of your lamentation after your rotten Judaism? I'll leave home to-night if you go on with this." He disappeared again, and I heard him strike a match in the next room.

"This is my reward for all my toil and labour," complained the mother in a hushed tone, shaking her head disconsolately. "How many nights did I deprive myself of sleep on his account! How many times did I not eat so that he could have the very best of food! And these are the thanks he gives me! Oi, America! America!" She shook her head as if in great distress. "Would that Columbus had been drowned before he discovered it!"

"I have nothing against Shmunke," she whispered to me the next instant; "if it had not been for us he would not have come here. What is the use of talking? We must keep quiet. He pays his board, and I make on him a dollar or a dollar and a half a week."

Then she walked upon her tiptoes to Shmunke's room, and opening the door timidly said:

"Shmu—a—Dzames, we have a guest, a student of Javolin——"

Without answering her he appeared with a lighted cigarette between his lips. With his chest thrust forward he stepped up to me and said in English, in a tone as if addressing an inferior: "So you are from Javolin. My name is Dzames Connally. I vas also a student of dat place."

When I had told him my name he shook my hand cordially and rattled off the following speech: "How t'ings turn! Before you vas de intelligence boy and I vas de fanatic, and yet [meaning now] you are, of course, a good orthodoxian Jewish and I am a free-t'inker. Dis ignorant Jewish makes me seeck vit deir religion." He spoke contemptuously, swinging his long arms and puffing out clouds of cigarette smoke. "And, besides, deir manners are awful, vit de beards and shabby clo'es, and dey talks not'ing but Yiddish. Deir condition is awful! And all because of deir fanaticcism and superstitiousness. Vere God—vat God?—ha! ha! ha! Dey goes to *shool* like in Russia and pray—to whom? Not'ing; dey pray. Is dere a God? Is it not nature—everyt'ing nature, as Spinoza believed? Dere is not'ing but nature. And if de Jewish would believe in Sotzialism and read Karl Marx and Lassalle, or at least read de *Arbeiter Zeitung* or *Dem Emes*, dey would too become delighted and educated like us culturised peoples."

He suddenly checked himself with a broad laugh. "Ha! ha! I forgotten myself dat you are a 'greener,'" and he changed into Yiddish. "It won't

take you long, and you will also speak English as good as I. I spoke English as good as now when I had been here only six months, and when a year passed nobody could tell that I was not born in America. Ha! ha! ha!" He drifted off again into English. "I comes in a big cloding hoi'se and de proprietor says to me, 'Mr. Connally, I did not know you vas a Jew at all; I t'ought you vas a Yankee—indeed, you look like one.' Honest to God, nobody can tell dat I am not born in America, and I am here only a leetle over t'ree year. Ha! ha! ha! I forgotten myself again and I talks English to you."

As Shmunke, or James, was thus "delightening" me, his mother's greenish eyes quickly skipped from her son to me with covert pride, notwithstanding her previous grumblings regarding his infidelity; and Menke, drowsily leaning on his arm, puffed at his pipe unconcernedly.

A few minutes later Groone and I began to talk business, and after considerable bargaining we came to terms—seventy-five cents for lodging, and board to be furnished by her at actual cost. On the same afternoon my trunk was placed in Groone's "front room" and I had become her boarder, sitting in the only rocking-chair in the house and brooding over my sorry circumstances.

CHAPTER III

I LOOK FOR A JOB

ALTHOUGH Dovidle—I should say Mr. Levando, as he was best known here by his second name—was engaged in shirt-making himself, he said it would break his heart to see a graduate of gymnasium and university sewing garments, so he advised me to look for more genteel work. Thereupon Mr. Takiff suggested cigar-making, but Malke murmured that cigar-making would hurt my lungs and heart. However, Monday morning I decided to make a tour through the small cigar shops on the East Side, to look for a job. After an hour of aimless wandering I stopped before a number of English-Yiddish signs, with a determination to seek work from some of the firms within. One large sign, dangling from a fire-escape landing on a fourth floor, bore the words, "*Agudas Achim d'kak Shnipinkoffka*"—that is, the brotherly congregation of the above-named Russian town. Immediately below it I read: "Here are made the cheapest pants in America by Getzel Simachowitch, clothing manufacturer. Button-holes, overalls, shirts, knee pants, children's suits, and caps a specialty. Hands wanted."

I stood there with my eyes uplifted, studying the puzzling sign and wondering whether the Agudas Achim, etc., was the name of a corporation of which Simachowitch was the manager, or whether there were two firms on this one floor. I might ask some one, I thought. A little Jew with matted beard, dressed in a sack-coat which had done good service to an "uptown" gentleman whose height must have exceeded the present wearer about six inches, and wearing white trousers which had evidently belonged to the same "uptown" gentleman, and which were now rolled up to fit the present owner's short legs, was rushing by me, carrying a bundle of merchandise under one arm and several old hats in the other hand.

"Mister," I cried after this thrifty peddler, "what is the meaning of this sign?"

He looked at me distrustfully. "What is there to puzzle you?" and he continued puffing at his cheroot.

"Is it a tailor shop or a sh——" I was ashamed to utter the word *shool*, lest he should laugh in my face again.

"It is very plain. Even a child can read Yiddish and understand it"; and he was about to leave.

"But——" I remonstrated.

"Can't you see it is a *shool*?" he interrupted somewhat testily.

"But the other sign below?" I added.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed, displaying two rows of

rotten teeth. "A green animal," he said to another hawker who was just passing with a big bundle, and he sped away, with a trail of smoke after him, like a "night express."

I looked at some more signs. One read: "Aaron Swalski, from Barditschev. Chazan, fowl-killer, circumciser, matchmaker; officiates at weddings; dealer in all kinds of Hebrew books; Hebrew teacher. Everything, as at home in Russia, at the lowest prices."

On the third story I noticed another sign of a clothing manufacturer, and I decided to go in and offer my services.

I walked up two flights of stairs and found myself in a hallway so dark that I could see no door. Sewing-machines worked speedily somewhere within and made the floor tremble. As I stood wondering where the door could be, it swung open, and I was almost knocked over by a boy with sleeves rolled up, who darted past me and down the stairs. I entered the door and found myself in a square room, the dimensions of which could not have been more than sixteen feet. Two girls sat stooped over sewing-machines, with their eyes fixed upon the pieces of cloth that they pushed under the needles.

"Whr-r—whr-r—whr-r-r-r——" the machines hummed busily. At another machine sat an elderly man with spectacles, and one machine stood unoccupied, which I surmised belonged to the boy who had almost caused my overthrow at the door.

There was only one window; a small gaslight burned over the elderly man's machine, which was farthest from the window. A woman whose forehead was half-covered with a wig was pulling the thread from seams; next to her stood a presser, whose face was bathed in perspiration, which he frequently wiped off with his rolled-up shirt-sleeves; and by his side was a gasoline stove on which the irons were heating.

No one noticed me as I entered, except the be-wigged woman, who gave me a furtive glance and dropped her eyes back to the seam.

A few minutes later the boy who had passed me in the hall returned. He was the boss's son, he informed me, and, the boss being away, he would attend to my wants.

One girl nudged her neighbour with her elbow, and both cast glances at my feet. The two of them began to giggle. The blood ascended to my face; my feelings were wounded. In my native land I was respected as a student; here working-girls laughed at me.

"I can tell a greener by his shoes," I overheard one say.

It was only my foreign shoes they laughed at. However, it hurt me. We are so egotistic that we even feel the insults directed at our belongings.

The presser rolled up his sleeves a little higher and started a Yiddish song. One girl hummed after him and the machines after her. The other girl raised her eyes to me. Both of us blushed.

To hide her blush, I suppose, she said: "Joe, don't show off your musical talents."

All this attention from the hands of the shop I had observed while telling the boss's son that I was looking for work. "Are you a tailor from home?" the boy asked me with what seemed to me an impudent air.

That again hurt me not a little. Could he not see that I did not look like a tailor from home?

"No," I answered curtly.

"Then we need no 'greeners,'" he said arrogantly. "We can get enough experienced hands."

I closed the door. A shrill laugh followed me.

I decided to go up another flight and see Simachowitch. When I reached the door of the manufacturer of pants, overalls, skirts, and children's suits I could hear no sound within except a slight click, between that of a sewing-machine and that of a slot-machine.

I entered the room hesitatingly and remained standing near the door. There was only one person in the room—a middle-aged man, bending over a button-hole machine.

At the farther end of the room stood a red-painted box, the size of a coffin, in which the scrolls of the Torah were buried, I supposed, and which was overhung by a curtain with a "Yahweh star" in the center. It was a house of worship, surely. There also stood near the ark a crazy book-case

with some old books in it. Surely a house of worship, I said to myself.

Although I could tell from the expression of the man making button-holes that he was aware of my presence, he did not raise his eyes, but kept them fixed on the machine. His beard struck my fancy first; it was of a quaint colour: the sides were almost red, the lower part almost dark, his mustache fairly brown. His eyes were dim and watery; his forehead was high and broad; a skull-cap rested peacefully on his head. This was Simachowitch, "the cheapest clothing manufacturer in America," whose specialties were button-holes, overalls, shirts, knee pants, etc.

When he had finished a button-hole the machine jerked and stopped, and the operator raised his head questioningly. I repeated what I had said on the floor below.

Squinting his eyes and contracting the muscles of his face, he asked in a voice that sounded like a stuffed-up whistle, evidently without having heard my question: "What do you wish?"

I told him again.

"I thank my stars that I have enough work for myself, and that is not steady"; and he went on with the making of another button-hole.

"But your sign reads that you manufacture pants."

"Why, do you want to buy any pants?" He rose as if to wait on me.

"No, but I thought you needed hands. So you don't manufacture at all?"

"No; I make button-holes. But I sell pants, too."

"But the sign——" I insisted, with my natural proneness to argue.

"I see you are a 'greener,'" he answered, smiling and wiping his watery eyes. "Look here, it is business. I bought the sign of a party who manufactured everything there is on that, and I erased that party's name and put on mine instead. Besides, it looks nicer."

I was a "greener," and did not understand.

"Is this a synagogue also?" my curiosity prompted me to ask.

"Why, do you have *Yahrzeit* [death anniversary of either parent]? I am the sexton here."

I thought I had seen this man before, but I could not place him. The voice in particular sounded familiar. So I made another attempt to make him reveal his identity.

"Is tailoring a good trade here?"

"Are you a tailor from home?" he answered with a question, unintentionally wounding my pride.

"No. How is cigar-making?" I tried again.

"Are you going to learn the cigar trade? I'll sell you a cigar-cutter and a board—dirt cheap," he said, emphasising the last word. "I tried to learn it myself, but have given it up. It did not agree with my lungs very well." And he coughed,

as if he wished to show me how much it had affected him, and then he resumed his work on the button-holes.

After I had looked at the man for a minute or two something like a flash of lightning brightened my memory—Getzel Gorgle! My heart beat faster; the consciousness of another acquaintance sent a thrill of delight through my heart.

"I beg your pardon," I began apologetically. "Weren't you the teacher of the Talmud Torah at——"

The machine stopped abruptly with a click, and raising his head inquisitively he said in a soft tone: "And who are you from home? Sit down, please." He wiped the dust from a chair without a back, remarking: "I can see that you are not one of the common people."

I told him who I was.

"Shrolke!" He sprang up with joy. "I am so glad to see you—as my own child. *Shone Zion!* They told me that you went to the gymnasium, and that you were baptised long ago. May your enemies bite off their tongues for uttering such calumnies!"

"And how long have you been here?" I asked.

"About eight years. I have tried everything, but I find button-holing the best business for me. And why did I leave home?" He shrugged his shoulders, answering a question I had in my mind. "The town burned down a second time and left

me without a position. What could I do at home? I sailed for America."

After he had urged me a number of times to call at his house, or if I did not care to honour him in that way, at least to call at Saturday's service in Shool, I promised to see him again, and left him clicking at his machine.

Coming into the street, I lifted my eyes to read another sign. I had some experience now, and knew that not everything on the sign was true. However, noticing a placard in a window that read, "Ten thousand hands wanted," and realising that I could supply two of these, I opened the door of the shop.

"Any work?" I asked.

Here again I found one man bent almost double over a sewing-machine and pushing a piece of skin under the needle.

"No," he answered.

"Whrr—whrr—whrr—rrrr," the machine whirled and hummed.

I pointed to the placard in the window.

He glanced at me, scrutinising me from the crown of my head to the narrow-pointed tips of my foreign shoes, and laughed. "Oh, I see you're a 'greener.' Of course I want ten thousand hands to wear my gloves."

I went to my lodging and stretched myself upon my bed, lost in a sea of despairing thoughts.

CHAPTER IV

IN A "SWEAT-SHOP"

THE same evening I had a long consultation with Mr. Takiff and Malke (her husband being out for business most of the time), and though the latter strenuously objected and the former grumbled that the handicraft of a plain workman was altogether unbecoming for me, I decided to learn shirt-making at Mr. Levando's. I realised that at present I could not depend on my knowledge of languages to make a living.

Mr. Levando's shirt factory was on the third floor of a rickety old frame house among the tall tenements of Suffolk Street, in the heart of New York's Jewry. The dingy building, once red, but now the colour of the gutters, stood prominent among the other buildings by reason of its very humbleness. Under one of the windows was nailed an unassuming square sign bearing the inscription: "D. Levando, shirt manufacturer."

After jumping over a number of little ones that blocked the passage, rolling about like kittens, I reached the factory. It occupied a room perhaps fifteen feet square, with two windows, both on the same side. The seven sewing-machines filled the

room with a whirring noise that made the windows and the door tremble.

At sight of me Mr. Levando dropped the shirt on which he was working and came forward with a beam of welcome in his eyes. "Well!" he said with a sigh, "though it grieves me to see a university graduate taking up a handicraft, I'll be glad to teach you the trade, since you can do nothing better."

While he was speaking I glanced at the operators. There were two boys, Mr. Levando's sons, whom I knew—Daniel, a boy of sixteen, with disorderly dark-brown hair and dreamy brown eyes, and Jacob, an older boy of rather commonplace appearance; a scholarly looking young man with a scanty beard and big black eyes; and four girls.

"But one consolation I can give you—your co-workers here belong to the same class you do," he went on gloomily.

"That young man with the small beard"—he lowered his voice—"held a rabbinical position for over two years, and has read Spinoza and Kant at that. My two boys were both bright students at home, and here——" He did not finish the sentence, but instead wiped away a tear.

"What can I do?" he resumed in a stifled tone. "They must help me till I am able to support my family without their assistance. We have been here only two years, and taking into consideration my limited experience in this business, as well as

my foreign tongue, I have done very well indeed. But my heart bleeds when I think of their being cut off from education, for which they have aspired and striven so hard."

He paused; his grief made me forget my own; the noisy hum—human and metallic—told me more than he could express.

"This is the fruit of Russian kindness," he added ironically.

The next day I started on my new career. Daniel, Mr. Levando's youngest son, was my instructor. After a few days' practice I was able to work and talk at the same time. I found the small company exceedingly pleasant. Occasionally we would indulge in long discussions. We talked philosophy, poetry, religion, economics—of Russia (with a pang at my heart), of her literature, of her Jews, and of her inhumanity.

Daniel Levando was of a quiet disposition; he always looked sad and dreamy. His eyes showed that he was keenly critical, but the lower part of his face told that he was easily moved by emotions—by pity, sympathy, love. Though his profile, his thoughtfulness, and his peculiar sadness showed his Hebrew lineage clearly enough, his type was not purely Semitic.

When he was not working he was thinking deeply. This struck me as odd, considering that he was scarcely sixteen years old, though to be sure his steady, penetrating look was of one ten years his

senior. However, he was the fastest hand in the shop. His hands were small and soft, of the artistic type; observing them, no one would suspect that he had ever done manual work. There was only one blister on his right palm (from cutting cloth), and he used to say hopefully: "This will disappear in two weeks when I stop using the knife."

His silence at times was intense, but a close observer would have detected lines of eloquence in that tightly closed mouth. Most people are silent because they have nothing to say; some keep quiet because they have too much to say. Like a volcano they burn inside, and emit fire and lava only at intervals. When Daniel began to speak he was changed into a different being. His brown eyes shot fire, his usually calm face glowed with a fine heat, and his body fairly quivered from nervous emotion. Every argument came from sincere conviction, every word from the depths of his heart. As soon as he ceased talking he would work on quietly, without uttering a word—thinking and dreaming.

Any one who would have met young Daniel rambling in the Ghetto, his head slightly dropped and looking abstractedly in the shop windows, or studying the ground as he walked, would perhaps have taken him for a disciple of Fagin looking for spoil. Few indeed would have suspected that the poor little martyr, sauntering about the sordid

Ghetto, was thinking of something higher than earthly things! But that boy did think, as I found out from his talk, and was pondering on difficult problems of religion, philosophy, and economics, and I learned, too, that he wrote beautiful verses in the sacred tongue, which was his favourite language.

When Daniel would lose himself in some revery, bent over the whirring machine, the "professional Rabbi," as we called Mr. Rabbinowitz, would nudge him and say: "Enough of your dreams and reveries, Daniel. Be a business man like your father; no dreaming in practical America. Here the dollar is the best dream, if you wake up and find it a reality. Work, Dan, work; you will make a shrewd business man some day; you have enough ambition and brains."

To me he would whisper: "Russia lost a poet, perhaps a novelist like Turgenieff, in this youth."

Several months passed, full of exhausting work, but made almost pleasant by agreeable companionship. I had almost become accustomed to the sweat-shop and to work with my hands, but I felt that the machine was gradually undermining my constitution. My cheeks faded, and I coughed quite often, especially at night. I realised I ought to give up shirt-making, but at the same time I felt it discreet not to do so until I saw better prospects ahead.

Mr. Levando sold most of his product to one firm,

Mark Fetter & Company, prominent wholesale dealers in men's furnishing goods, and the tenement where the Levando family worked and lived was owned by the head of the firm, Mark Fetter, a German Jew. This firm was far from popular with the Levandos. "I would rather go to a pack of wild dogs than on these errands," Daniel would often confide to me when his father sent him to deliver shirts. And Daniel's opinion was the opinion of his father and brother.

One warm afternoon in the early fall, when we were driving our machines at full speed, Mr. Levando returned from a call upon Mark Fetter & Company in a very happy frame of mind. "I have a big order, and I hope we shall have steady work all winter," he announced joyfully as soon as he was in the shop.

"Were you at Fetter's?" asked his eldest son.

Mr. Levando's happiness subsided very suddenly.

"Yes. He tried to squeeze us again."

"Oh, that Mark Fetter!" muttered Daniel. "I'd rather starve than take work from that fellow."

"Daniel," replied the father softly, "you know how much I love that haughty fool with the glasses, but what can we do at present? He buys most of our goods, and we must endure him till we have worked ourselves up a little, and then we can shake him off entirely."

"Whrrr—whrrr—whrrr—rrr—whzzz," went the machines, and we fell to work again at full speed.

One of the girls, about seventeen and very pretty, began to sing a popular love song. Several of us tried to join in, but she sang so much better than any of us that we stopped and let her carry the song alone. It brought back to me recollections that were sweetly painful, and unconsciously I let my foot rest quietly on the treadle. The singer, however, worked on automatically as she poured forth her soul in the song.

"Stop!" cried Mr. Levando suddenly.

The song broke off abruptly, and we all looked up. A tall, solidly built man, with a hooked nose and piercing black eyes that glared behind glasses, stood by the door, like a tyrannical general surveying an army. He was bandy-legged, with a crop of curly jet-black hair, bushy black mustache, and narrow forehead. He looked fiercely around him without a stir, not even a bow to Mr. Levando.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fetter." The "boss" bowed obsequiously, but the visitor did not respond by even so much as a nod of his head.

"How many dozen shirts do you make a day, Levando?" asked Mr. Fetter superciliously, his glance not upon the one he addressed, but wandering about the room, scrutinising everything and everybody in the small shop.

Mr. Levando answered humbly. Then he added: "You buy most of them, and the rest I sell to another house."

"You Russians want the earth with the fence

around it," Mr. Fetter said harshly. "When one gives you one hair you want the whole beard—hey, Pullack?" (The German Jews and their American extraction call any co-religionist Pullack who was not fortunate enough to have been born in Germany.)

"I gave you the first ten dollars to buy material," he continued, "and pledged my credit for your machinery and tools, and rented you these rooms for twenty-two dollars which are worth twenty-five dollars at least, with the clear understanding that you must not sell your goods to any one else. I found out the other day that you sell goods to another firm at the same prices you do to me." He spoke cruelly and moved his fierce black eyes right and left.

"But judge for yourself, sir," said Mr. Levando in self-justification. "We made no agreement to this effect, and how could I possibly make a decent living for my family by depending solely upon you? And your prices are so low."

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven hands," Mr. Fetter counted off, pointing at each one with his finger, on which glittered a costly diamond ring. "What do you want all these people for? Your two sons and a girl would make just enough for my use, and I think you could make a respectable living and have herring and potatoes to your heart's content, especially by this cheap rent you pay me."

"But, Mr. Fetter," pleaded the other in humilia-

tion, and tears stood in his grayish-blue eyes, "you know well enough what low prices you pay me. Lately you have pressed the prices down so far that I can scarcely make a living by the work of all of us." A tear trickled down the sweater's face into his thick black beard.

"Why, your boys make about eight dollars a week, you told me, and your work is worth about the same. Isn't that enough for a livelihood?" Mr. Fetter asked this with an air of astonishment, as he might wonder at the income of the Rothschilds not being enough for a family's support. "Did you make more in Russia or Poland, wherever the devil you came from?"

"Oh, in Russia," sighed Mr. Levando, as if that word wounded him—"in Russia I had my own houses, and did not have to pay twenty-two dollars for five small rooms."

"You Pullacks become actually wild when you come over to this country. No wonder the Czar is driving you people out. You wish to grab everything—everything. Have you ever lived in a house in the country where you came from with such big windows as this—hey? Here you want nice carpets and nice stoves and perhaps a piano, too. All your people are a lot of *Schnorrers* [beggars], one as bad as the other."

We all kept our faces down and our feet pressing the treadles softly—all except Daniel, who had been cutting a thickly folded pad of linen. He now laid

down his long cutter's knife and moved about restlessly, his face glowing with intense agitation.

"How much do you make a week?" Mr. Fetter asked of our prima donna, who blushed and looked up at the "boss." He gave her a wink, which she evidently interpreted "higher price," but as half a dollar was a big sum to her, she answered: "Six dollars and a half."

"You Pullack! Schnorrer!" Mr. Fetter shouted indignantly, as if he would play philanthropist. "You only pay six-fifty to such a big grown girl, and you wish to become a millionaire and have a piano in your house—hey?"

"But how can I pay more when the prices I get for my goods are so low? Raise the prices on my shirts, and I'll raise wages." Mr. Levando's face grew red with subdued anger.

"A discount of four per cent. will be my terms for your goods henceforth. Who will buy of you shabby Pullack, and who will understand your broken English and jabbering German?"

I noticed that Daniel's face burned and that he quivered in every limb.

"But how can I live? The prices are low enough as they are," the poor "sweater" said imploringly.

"Well," said Mr. Fetter in a slow, staccato-like tone, "if you don't agree I'll bundle you out with your cockroaches, take away the machines, and put in some other lousy Pull——"

"You dirty scoundrel! Get out of here! and

quick!" Daniel shouted, jumping up, with his cutter's knife flashing in his trembling hand like a sword. He looked fierce, almost wild—like a young Italian bandit.

"Daniel!" cried his father in consternation.

Mr. Fetter stepped toward the door in alarm. "Keep that dog off," he ordered with a sneer.

"Get out, or——" shrieked the raging youth.

"I'll teach you a lesson," Mr. Fetter said fiercely between his teeth and rushed out.

Perfect quiet reigned in the shop. No one uttered a word. Mr. Levando remained standing, speechless, in the middle of the room, his skull-cap pushed back, exposing his high and broad forehead, on which wrinkles appeared and disappeared, and his shrewd, almond-shaped grayish-blue eyes filled with tears. His eldest son, being of a very peaceful nature, looked a little angry with his younger brother for his rashness, but there was at the same time some satisfaction in his eyes. Fannie, our prima donna, stole admiring glances through the corners of her eyes at Daniel, and all of us regarded him with a new respect in which there was a little of fear. He sat down in his chair and leaned his head on his bare arm, the knife still clenched in his hand, and his tears flowed profusely upon the table littered with pieces of linen and muslin.

CHAPTER V

THE END OF THE SWEAT-SHOP

THE following morning, just after we had sat down to work, two men opened the door and asked for David Levando. Mr. Levando, who was stooping over a large bundle of finished goods which he was preparing for delivery, straightened up, a trifle frightened, and asked what was their wish. The younger of the two men said he was a lawyer, and that his companion was a constable, and there-upon he produced a writ of replevin. Mr. Levando stared dazedly at the two, and the rest of us sat bewildered, with our feet motionless on the treadles. Daniel was the first to ask the attorney to explain what the trouble was, to whose question the latter explained very explicitly: "Mark Fetter, who holds a chattel mortgage on all of your belongings, replevins the goods instead of commencing foreclosure proceedings."

"But, if you please," the poor mortgagor pleaded with the lawyer, "I only owe Mr. Fetter forty-five dollars on this mortgage, and my machines and other goods are well-nigh worth one thousand dollars."

"Well, you will have the chance to prove this in court," the attorney replied with a smile, as if to

say: "I know your tricks." "I have got the notes in my possession, and they show an indebtedness of five hundred and seventy-three dollars, besides interest at 8 per cent. for one year and three months."

"But I have paid all this but forty-five dollars. It was deducted from my bills when I delivered goods to him. The interest was figured in the principal when he loaned me the money." There were tears in the eyes of the unfortunate "sweater."

"Well, you'll have your say in court," the attorney replied shortly. And turning to the constable he said: "Call up your men and begin to pack up."

The constable opened the door and shouted down the stairs: "Oh, Bill! Come up!" Two men immediately appeared.

"Youse ladies and gentlemen will have to get up," the constable said, turning to us operators.

All of us arose instantly; some of us trembled, for the fear of legal authority generated by Russian tyranny and oppression was still strong in those of us who were not long from our native land of barbarism. We stood huddled together in a corner, full of pity and sympathy for our poor employer, who remained standing in the middle of the room, with his skull-cap on the back of his head, his hands clasped in front of him, and tears gathering in his almond-shaped eyes.

"You may still have the goods," said the lawyer philanthropically, "if you pay us the full amount

of these notes, and for your sake I'll throw off half the interest."

"But I only owe him forty-five dollars!" Mr. Levando returned imploringly. "And even those forty-five dollars I can't pay him to-day. We agreed that Mr. Fetter should deduct this sum from the next five bills of goods."

"Well, you'll tell your tale in court," the lawyer responded nonchalantly. "Hurry up and get these things out," he said to the constable and his assistant.

While we were all watching them carry out Mr. Levando's machines—our bread-winners—a policeman entered and asked for Daniel. The officer read to the trembling youth a warrant which charged him with assault with intent to kill. A sad smile played on the boy's lips as the officer took him by the arm and led him away.

Mr. Levando left all his belongings to the mercy of the constable and followed the officer and his son. And a short while later the little sweat-shop was quiet—without a whirr of a machine, without a click, without the sound of a voice—quiet and empty!

CHAPTER VI

I APPLY FOR AID AND GET SOMETHING ELSE

IN the afternoon I went to Mr. Levando's home. He was utterly exhausted from running about to procure the release of his son, whose bail had been fixed at one thousand dollars. Those of his friends who were willing to give bail had no property, and those who had feared to stake it. The family was a picture of distress. Mrs. Levando lay on a couch, moaning and crying; the oldest son sat helplessly on the arm of a rocking-chair, with his head drooped and his hands clasped around his knees, and Mr. Takiff puffed at his pipe and cursed the "golden land," its people and its laws.

"Blazes to this country with her justice!" he complained bitterly. "It's worse than Russia——"

"A thousand times worse," struck in Mrs. Levando.

"Who ever heard," resumed Mr. Takiff wrathfully, "that a boy of seventeen years should be locked up under one thousand dollars bail?"

Mrs. Levando groaned, "Oi, my dear child—my Daniel, he will have to stay in jail overnight!" and she burst anew into a flood of tears.

"And he says America is a good country." Mr.

Takiff turned to his brother-in-law, his eyes full of anger.

"I don't blame this country at all," said David Levando calmly. "It is that rascal, Mark Fetter, who is bad. He wants to ruin us. Well, we'll start over again. Let us suppose we have just landed here, and Daniel is kept back for some reason or other at Castle Garden. A few days will pass by and we'll be ourselves again." Though despair dwelt in every feature of his countenance, he forced a smile.

"What's the use of talking to him?" said his wife disconsolately, turning to me and her brother. "One way or the other, he will always find some justification for this country."

"And you claim to be a pious Jewess," said Mr. Levando, with an attempt to be humorous. "Does not the Talmud say, 'Just as we praise God for His goodness, we should also praise Him for His unkindness'?"

I slipped out of this house of sorrow and walked along Canal Street, thinking how I could be of some assistance to them. First the idea of my helping them seemed absurd, as I had only a dollar and some cents in my possession. Then a hopeful thought cleared the gloom from my mind. "The Jews in general have always been charitable." But to whom could I apply? I scarcely knew any one. Of course I had heard of Jewish philanthropists in New York, but how could I reach those

magnanimous men? Then I thought of the rabbis. Surely I could find some rabbi who would help Mr. Levando, with a recommendation at least, or influence Mark Fetter to drop his proceedings.

I had heard of Doctor Fuchs, who was the rabbi of a gorgeous uptown synagogue, and who was renowned for his erudition. I determined to apply to him for assistance. If he won't help he won't harm, I assured myself. On looking up his address in the Directory I found he lived far uptown, and my capital was so scanty that I could hardly afford to spend ten cents for car-fare. I hesitated long before I decided to take a Third Avenue elevated train. "If I do not find the Rabbi it means ten cents wasted," I reflected, and started out on foot. I walked several squares and stopped. "Nearly ninety squares." I hesitated and again fumbled the "dime" in my pocket, whirled it, fondled it, and unconsciously began climbing the stairs to the elevated station. A minute later I pushed a nickel through the ticket window.

Sitting in the car and gazing out at the flying buildings, I was startled by the thought that I had not changed my collar and that my clothes did not look decent. But I had no other clothes. I was poor, and "poverty is no disgrace," is a saying among the poor, and thus found some comfort.

Finally the conductor choked down his throat the name of my station. I got off and slowly descended the stairs leading to the street. I walked slowly

along, looking for the number of Doctor Fuchs's residence. The neighbourhood gave every evidence of being fashionable. Having lived about a year in the filthy, narrow streets of the Ghetto, I felt as if I had no right to breathe the air of this region or to tramp on its clean sidewalks. In that year I had lost all my manly pride, my courage, my self-possession; a capital "I" was no longer a pronoun for me.

I walked as if I were treading on forbidden ground. When I noticed a pretty girl looking through the window between the lattice of costly curtains, or a well-dressed man descending the broad, clean stairs of his mansion and puffing at his fragrant cigar, I was inclined to bow and beg pardon for intruding upon the high personage.

I found the house that I sought, but its elegance frightened me, so I walked past it to the next corner. Then I plucked up courage, and returning I ascended the stoop and timidly pulled the knob of the door-bell. I heard its tinkling deep within the house, and an echo, I thought, sounded deep within me. I felt awkward, and stood before the house like a tramp waiting for a sandwich.

The door opened, and a pretty German servant-girl (I could not help thinking of her beauty) stuck out her head and glanced at me, and asked me what I wished. In much embarrassment I told her that I wished to see Reverend Doctor Fuchs. She

showed me into the reception room and disappeared with my request.

In a few minutes, which seemed double their number, a middle-aged, obese woman of medium height, with a flat nose, double chin, and green eyes, rustled into the room, panting as she walked, her diamond earrings bobbing and twinkling. She contracted her eyelids, as if to get a better look at me, in order to judge what reception to give me. Evidently the impression was not favourable, for her face assumed a sour expression as she said to me: "Doctor Fuchs iss taking hiss avternun nap from one to two."

"I'll wait until the Doctor gets up," I said in a humble tone.

She opened her mouth to respond, but closed it without saying a word. She then turned around as if to depart, but did not go; she opened her mouth, and closed it again without speech. All this increased my embarrassment.

"Vait for him in de liprary," she said at last, and drew a velvet curtain aside.

I sat down in the room designated near the door, with my hat in both hands. She disappeared, and I heard the rustling of her dress sweeping over the thick velvet carpet.

I began to wonder just how to start my tale of woe. I also wondered what language to use. At length I decided upon English, for I had learned that he was imported from Germany, and I knew

these German Jews preferred to speak English to an inferior, and especially to a Russian of their race.

At the end of the room was a desk, behind which stood two high cases filled with hundreds of volumes. But, I observed, no Talmud was there. The library opened into another room, partitioned by curtains, between the folds of which frequently appeared a flat nose and two green eyes.

I waited and yawned and waited. I studied the colour of the carpet, the wall-paper, and counted the books in the two cases. I noticed a paper lying on a chair close to mine, and I picked it up. At this movement on my part the flat nose and green eyes were again framed between the curtains.

Finally, after I had scrutinised everything about me, heavy steps reached my ears. I divined the coming of Rabbi Fuchs. I cleared my throat, passed my hand down over the buttons of my waistcoat, passed my slim fingers through my hair to arrange it in poetic disarrangement, and awaited his arrival. He appeared at the door and measured me from the soles of my torn shoes to the top of my untrimmed hair in one glance from his steady, cold eyes. He was a little taller than his wife and almost as fat, and his grayish beard was closely trimmed. His nose was aquiline, and purple at the end, which I thought (mistakenly, perhaps) resulted from a too zealous worship of Bacchus. He wore a white tie and a high waistcoat, which—so my fancy

struck me—gave him the full appearance of the Almighty's coachman. His forehead was originally not high, but it was heightened and broadened by his partial baldness.

I rose and bade him "good afternoon," to which he bowed perfunctorily.

He did not ask me to sit down, so I told him my story standing, expatiating especially on the high position of the Levandos in former days. He listened as members of his congregation listen to his sermons, I thought; but he did not fall asleep. He stood with his hands in his trousers pockets, unmoved by my tale of woe as his congregation by his lectures, I fancied. Several times I noticed a spasmodic shake of his head, as if he wished to interrupt me, but he waited without a word to the end of my speech. This politeness, flashed through my mind, he had also learned from his flock.

"Oh, yes, you Russians are ever dissatisfied with work and look for something easy," he said coldly. "Anarchism, Socialism, Nihilism, and all kinds of isms—that's all you care about. I can't do anything for you. There are Hebrew charity societies and hospitals which do all they can for paupers and immigrants."

"But you must realise," I pleaded, almost with tears in my eyes, "the injustice of Mr. Fetter in trying to ruin this noble family, that has worked in a 'sweat-shop' in order to make an honest living. I do not ask of you anything but merely to go

and see Mr. Fetter on behalf of these unfortunate people, and he will not be so hard upon them."

"I know you Russians," he said impatiently. "Well, this you have for your trouble," he added with a meaning smile, drawing half a dollar from his pocket and handing it to me.

At this I lost my control. I spat on his outstretched hand and shrieked at the highest pitch of my voice: "Hypocrite! high-toned beggar! I ask no alms of you, stone-hearted rabbi in Israel!" He grew as white as the tie he wore around his neck, and his fat wife, who had been watching us between the curtains, rushed to the front door and cried: "Police! Police!"

An officer answered the call with a promptness that ought to be recorded in the history of the police department.

"Dis Russian anarchist vanted to sjhoot my husband if he vouldn't give him a t'ousand t'alers," Mrs. Fuchs explained to the officer. Rabbi Fuchs stood dumfounded and trembling.

"Come along—come along," said the officer, giving me a few touches from his club. "We have a good place for anarchists who throw bombs." He laid hold of my arm, gripped it tightly, and led me out of the house.

Some people appeared on the neighbouring stoops; servant-girls stood in the doors and windows, with their aprons rolled around their clasped hands, looking at the officer and his prisoner. A driver

jumped off his wagon, and leaving his horses standing in the middle of the street eagerly inquired: "What's the matter?" An increasing crowd of boys followed us excitedly as we walked toward the corner.

The policeman telephoned for another officer to take me to the station, and while we waited for his arrival a large crowd gathered around us, asking one another: "What's the matter?" I heard several voices answer: "An anarchist." "He was going to shoot Doctor Fuchs."

I heard all this as if in a dream. I became so confused that I lost my memory and did not know what had happened. A cold drizzle began to fall. I kept my eyes on the ground and wished for some open grave below. One of the crowd shouted: "Look at his face! Look at his eyes! He shot Rabbi Fuchs!"

"Did I?" I asked myself. I did not know then. Perhaps I had shot him.

In a comparatively short time another officer arrived and took me to the station. The desk-sergeant asked my name (which I had given as Russ) and inquired regarding my nationality. They searched my pockets, in which they found a dollar and a few cents. Then I was locked up.

When I sat down on the bunk in my dark room I realised what had happened to me that afternoon. My expectations were gone, and now I was confined in a murky cell with a lot of criminals. Criminals,

did I say? They were, perhaps, just as much criminals as I.

How I spent that night I leave to the reader's imagination.

The next morning about ten o'clock I was taken to the police court and there brought before the magistrate. Now I could see who my mates were. On the prisoners' bench sat a thin, emaciated, unwashed, unkempt boy, who looked to be about sixteen years of age, whereas according to his statement he was twenty-two. He had a bruised eye, which he claimed was caused by the friendly caress of the officer who had arrested him. He wore a tattered jacket, and parts of his bare body were exposed through the rents in his trousers, and one big toe peeped curiously through a hole in his shoe. This prisoner was accused of vagrancy and of trying to "steal" a night's sleep in the corridor of a fashionable residence.

Another prisoner was a young woman about twenty-five years old who wore a dark veil, through which I observed, however, that her face, though handsome, was dissipated. When she uttered the word "Guilty" to the charge of vagrancy and disorderly conduct I heard the echo of a sad tragedy in her voice. Another victim, whose name was Finnigan, had tasted a little more "whishky" than he could stand, which was a crime under the New York code. There were a few more interesting prisoners whom I had no time to study before my

name was called and I was pushed up before the magistrate.

The prosecutor read a long list of accusations against me in a voice like the conductors' who call out streets, and I could only catch: "What have you got to say for yourself?"

"Not guilty," I stammered.

The officer who had arrested me was called to the witness-stand and stated all he knew, or rather all he did not know.

The Rabbi did not appear, so there was no evidence against me.

However, the judge dipped his pen in the ink-stand and, looking at me over his spectacles, said: "Thirty days and costs."

My trial was finished. An officer tapped me on the shoulder and told me to follow him. In the lobby my conductor stopped to talk with a brother officer, and while they chatted I noticed a newspaper of the previous night on the floor. I picked it up. My eyes were instantly caught by the following headlines in startling black letters:

ANARCHIST MAKES ATTEMPT ON LIFE OF REVEREND DOCTOR FUCHS

**Eminent Divine Alive Only Because Revolver
Failed to Work**

**OFFICER BRAVELY INTERFERES AND WOULD-BE MURDERER
IS NOW SAFELY BEHIND PRISON BARS**

A picture of a big head covered with massive hair, staring eyes (which were supposed to be mine), and that of a revolver followed. The revolver was supposed to be the identical one with which I had attempted to kill Rabbi Fuchs. A long three-column article described how I had attacked the Rabbi, how the revolver would not go off, and how the officer heroically wrested the weapon from my hands. It related also that neighbours for several days previous had noticed me loitering about the Doctor's house, and that they had suspected the "young man with the long hair and wildly staring eyes" was looking for mischief; that the officer passed a number of sleepless nights in watching the suspected anarchist; that he was standing outside and waiting when the anarchist entered the Rabbi's house; that the anarchist tried to play the old "insanity trick" and laughed in the face of the officer; that the anarchist was a member of a secret society whose purpose was to blow up Broadway and Fifth Avenue, and so forth, and so forth. In conclusion, the writer stated that the Russian Jewish element on the East Side, otherwise peaceful citizens, must have a dangerous gang of anarchists among them, and he suggested that Levando's sweat-shop (for a highly coloured account of Daniel's outbreak had got into print) was very likely the place of meeting. Then followed a long interview with one of the city's most prominent business men, who takes much interest

in Jewish charities, Mr. Mark Fetter by name, who expressed himself as having knowledge that the Levandos were revolutionists.

The officer finished his friendly chat and pulled me after him to another cell, where I stayed a short time before I was taken to the workhouse to serve out my sentence.

CHAPTER VII

AN OLD FRIEND

AS SOON as I was set free I repaired to Mr. Levando's home, but found another family in their place. After some inquiries I was informed that some kind of a settlement had been effected between Mr. Levando and Mr. Fetter, and the former, in company with his brother-in-law, had left the city. I did not care to go back to my old boarding-place, for I was utterly weary of Shmunke, so I found new lodgings. I was again without friends in the sordid Ghetto.

My five weeks of imprisonment had left a deep impression upon me. I had been getting thin while I worked at the sweat-shop, and now I began to spit blood. I consulted a physician, who admonished me not to take up my old trade again. But he encouraged me and said there was no immediate danger if I should take good care of myself.

One night, after I had spent two or three hours in aimless wandering, I decided to go to a *café* on East Broadway which I frequented and rest for a while over a glass of tea. One could get here a good glass of tea for five cents and read Russian, German, and English papers to his heart's

content; and here one was likely to meet at any time of the day and before two o'clock in the morning Russian Jewish students who fled from gymnasiums and universities, and some from Siberia, discussing Socialism, Anarchism, philosophy, religion, and poetry. The restaurant was owned by a Russian, who, while waiting on customers, usually took part in all the discussions, and could not determine himself whether he was an anarchist, socialist, pessimist, or philosopher. He had been a student at Lodj, Poland, and later had tilled the stony fields of Palestine a few years.

Coming in now, I found the *café* well filled. I settled myself at my favourite table in the rear, ordered a cup of tea, and lighted my cigarette. People passed in and out, but I paid no attention to them. The *restaurateur* stood behind the counter and took part in a discussion on literature which was carried on by several young men, who dwelt principally on Dostoyevski. Some compared him to Victor Hugo and others to Edgar Allan Poe. I thought that this Russian novelist had some qualities of both, but I said nothing. The same young men had discussed the same subject a few nights before. I took up a paper and began to read, but occasionally raised my eyes and listened to the discussion. Presently when I looked up my eyes were caught immediately by a newcomer who had just joined the group of young men. His back was toward me, but a glance at him was sufficient.

I hurriedly rose from my chair and clapped my hand upon his shoulder.

"Ephraim!" I cried joyously.

He looked about, then sprang to his feet. "Why, Israel! You in America?"

Without waiting for my reply, he excused himself, and we went off to his room, talking volubly all the while.

"I thought you were digging gold for the Czar," I remarked when we had taken off our hats and settled into comfortable chairs.

"No, I knew better," he smiled, "and thought Siberia would be too cold for me."

He coughed violently, and took off his glasses, which he put carefully on his desk.

I observed his face by the yellowish light of the lamp that burned on the desk, and a shudder passed through me. It was thin and haggard; his long hair was neglected; his mustache was heavy and long, which made his cheeks appear still more hollow. But his eyes glittered with the same old fire.

"How did you escape? How did you come here? What have you been doing since?" I showered questions at him.

"I have not as many adventures to tell of as you imagine," Ephraim said, feigning to smile. "I was confined about seven months in a dark and filthy cell, in which big rats kept me company and had occasional fights over a crust of bread

that the turnkey had brought me. They claimed share and share alike, and I never denied them their rights.

"At first I felt lonesome, but after several days of confinement I grew accustomed to the foul atmosphere, and should not have felt so bad had they only let me have enough books to read. But I spent most of the time in thinking and brooding over ideas which I had entertained before I was locked up. I had no hopes of seeing the light of the world again, and now I wish I had not seen it. After all, prison life is not so bad as it is pictured, and I think that one with a clear conscience can breathe more freely in the oppressive prison cells than in this open, large, and treacherous world. Was I not more happy in prison than you, who had to witness the bloody riots—the disgrace of humanity? I considered myself an innocent victim—a martyr, so to speak, who suffered for the good of my fatherland. I loved Russia and her people, and was glad to make any sacrifice for them, thinking that it would further the cause of liberty. I admit that I lived in a delusion, but so long as I was of that opinion and it made me happy, what difference whether I was deceived or otherwise?"

"So you have at last changed your view, and you believe that not truth, but anything we take for truth, brings happiness?" I interrupted him.

"Well," he answered a little nervously, "I see you refer to my religious views. But you must

not confound religion with material happiness, just as you must discriminate between philosophy or logic and poetry. Religion is only pretended to lay down a certain hypothesis by which we reach truth. So naturally when we discover the hypothesis is wrong the conclusion must similarly follow. But material happiness is quite different. The enjoyment of it is the truth of it, and so long as we enjoy, it answers the purpose. For enjoyment, and not truth, is its aim.

"But I am straying from my narrative. I would rather have ended my days in prison than to come out as I did and find the recompense which the Russian people have paid us for our love for them."

He paused, and his face resumed a bitter expression.

"But I did come out after seven months of brooding and reflection," he resumed. "There was no strong evidence against me, so I was released. As soon as I was set free I hastened to Levinski. 'He left for Palestine,' his housekeeper told me. I tried to find friend after friend. 'In Palestine' or 'in America' were the answers I got everywhere. I had hardly an acquaintance left in Kieff. I hardly knew what to do. Weak from my long confinement, made friendless by Russian barbarism, I grew despondent and thought of suicide. I am ashamed of myself now; but you must remember the condition I was in. I carried poison about

me for days, but finally I regained control of myself and decided to come to this country.

"My experiences the first year in America were similar to the experiences you just told me. I made button-holes in a sweat-shop by day and studied English at night. Then I began to contribute articles to a Yiddish paper that paid me a little less than a penny a line. I gained success as a jargon writer. I am also writing for the Yiddish stage, and scrape a livelihood in all sorts of intellectual hack-work. In addition I gave English lessons to some Russian emigrants, who paid poorly but who are eager students. This finishes my history to the present day. No, I must add that I have been promoted to the editorship of my Yiddish paper."

"So you are writing Yiddish," I laughed, and I noticed that it hurt him.

"Yes, I write and speak my mother tongue with the blood of my heart and the energy of my brain, and I have succeeded in this kind of literature better than I had first expected. My stories, my dramas, are all tragedies. I see nothing but tragedies before me. The world is full of them—in Hester Street tenement houses and Fifth Avenue mansions. Perhaps some other class of readers would not tolerate me, but the Russian Jews are so accustomed to tragedy that they find nothing so real, nothing so true as my descriptions. They bear the memory of tragedies,

and witness tragedies in the New York Jewry every day."

Later in the evening our talk turned to religion, and I was surprised that he hated reformed Judaism even more than he had hated orthodox Judaism in the old days at Javolin and Kieff.

"So you are against reformed Judaism and you advocate the old belief," I casually remarked, laughing as I said this.

He looked at me seriously for a moment and his pale cheeks coloured. Lighting a cigarette, he puffed violently in silence for a while. Then he fixed his fiery eyes upon me and, while spurts of smoke issued rapidly from his mouth, he said: "Yes, I am against American reformed Judaism as such. I don't object to it as a separate creed, or rather the aping of a creed, but it is not religion—to be sure, not the religion of Judaism. Religion, and Judaism in particular, is poetry—and nothing but poetry. Or rather it is poetry for one and science for another. To the philosopher, searcher after truth, it is dry science *ad finem*, proved by algebraic formulas, and by the process of elimination gives a big zero. To mankind at large, in its present state of development, it is poetry pure and simple—poetry which cannot, must not be analysed by a mathematical process. Religion, no more 'than the 'Divine Comedy' or 'Paradise Lost,' can be reduced to prosaic accuracy. For as soon as we attempt to inquire

into their truth Dante and Milton become maniacs."

He spoke bitterly, brilliantly, puffing at cigarette after cigarette and inhaling all the smoke, his hair tumbled, his eyes darting fire, his body all aquiver from intellectual passion. I listened to him till two o'clock.

Friendless as I was, I was glad indeed to meet Razovski again. However, he could offer me no aid, so I had to continue my blind search for a job. So my financial condition grew acute and despair began to take hold of me.

CHAPTER VIII

ASSISTANCE COMES UNEXPECTEDLY

IT must have been a week later that, starting out of my room to get my supper, I happened to recall a cheap Jewish restaurant that had recently been opened in Hester Street, and thither I decided to go. In my better days I had been accustomed to eating in restaurants on East Broadway, but twenty-five cents was the price of a "regular supper" in those eating-places, and this sum I now regarded as extravagant.

This restaurant was in the basement of a six-story tenement house, and though a new establishment, it had won a speedy reputation. Its cheapness was its best advertisement. I stopped before a big sign with yellow letters that read in Yiddish:

"A regular dinner and supper, the best and most relishable Jewish dishes, as those in Poland, with a glass of beer and two cigarettes, for 9c. With chicken, 10c. Strictly *kosher*."

I did not care for its being strictly *kosher*, but it was strictly cheap, which was enough to attract me. I looked through the window, and finding the

room well filled with shabby people I hesitated to enter. But the "9c." on the big sign was an inducement I could not withstand, and I went in and sat down at a small table intended for two.

The dining-room was long and narrow, poorly furnished, and lighted by six gaslights. The waiter, or rather the *restaurateur* himself, attended busily to his customers, but he passed my chair several times without paying any attention to me. I was hungry, and thought of leaving the place. But the "9c." held me in my chair.

The customers came and went. I paid little attention to any of them till I noticed a man in a long, heavy ulster covered with snow, his hat drawn down over his eyes, walking slowly down the restaurant, keenly eying every customer. He was of medium height, with a pointed brown beard, lively dancing eyes that betokened shrewdness, conceit, and suspicion, and a straight nose which gave the owner a certain dignity of appearance. His eyes took me in while he was yet several tables away. He passed two or three vacant places and stopped at my table. He took his big ulster off and hung it on the back of his chair, and then, without removing his hat, sat down, rubbing his hands and emitting a soft sigh.

"It's getting cold," he said to me in Yiddish.

"It is," I answered abruptly, for his appearance had aroused my dislike and I did not care to talk to him.

“‘Tall-OO-Motor’ is just in time this season. Has it begun to-day?” he remarked casually, rubbing his hands again and eying me keenly. (His reference was to some prayer for dew and rain in Palestine, which orthodox Jews offer from about the middle of October until Passover.)

“I don’t pray,” I said shortly.

I glanced at him and noticed a smile pass over his lips.

“Ya, ya,” he said again, rubbing his hands and passing them over his face in a pious manner. “Ya, ya, Jewish children are straying off the righteous path our forefathers marked out for them.” Here he sighed softly and rolled his eyes ceilingward. “The footsteps of Moshiach [the Messiah] are almost heard.” He shook his head as if in despair, and then quoted from the Talmud: “‘For Moshiach is to come when Israel will become wholly righteous or wholly wicked.’”

The waiter spared me a reply by asking what soup I liked best, Lokshen or Borsch. I chose the latter; my interlocutor ordered the same, remarking, when the waiter had departed, that it was “a genuine Jewish dish” which reminded him of the good old days in God-fearing Poland, where the Jews were “genuine Jews.” He looked at me with a concealed smile in his dancing eyes.

I was disgusted with his pious talk, and thought to scare him away by saying something that a pious Jew would consider Epicurean. “If I had

known before that Borsch is genuine Jewish I would have ordered something else." And I said it in a tone which clearly conveyed to him that I did not belong to his class.

The waiter brought me the Borsch, and I hungrily began on the sour soup. My unwelcome table-mate first washed his hands, according to the orthodox ritual. He recited aloud the appropriate benediction over the bread, and took a big bite thereof, trying to draw the attention of other people to his piety.

"Well," he said to me while I was eating, "you mistake me; you don't understand me. I was like you some time ago." Here he lowered his voice and bent down his head as he continued: "It breaks my heart to see our brilliant young men who have brains, education, talent, skill, and energy waste their best days in the dirty 'sweat-shops.'"

He now paused, shook his head sympathetically, and resumed his meal.

His last few words removed something of my antipathy for him. He now touched a subject which had my sympathy. I was willing to hear him talk.

I suppose he noticed the change in my face, for I observed a satisfactory smile play in his lively eyes.

He talked about the condition of labour on the East Side for a while, then very deftly shifted the one-sided conversation to religion: "The love for

Judaism, the religion their fathers valued so precious, is entirely extinguished from the hearts of the younger generation. The Russo-Jewish intelligent young men who fled—or, rather, have been expelled—from the colleges and universities despise that old Judaism with its mystic ceremonies and absurd formalities. A pure monotheistic belief, shrouded in a cloud of ceremonies and symbols, may be beautiful, but it is by no means tenacious on the human mind. It may be good philosophy, but it is poor religion. At least, it is too remote for the average brain to grasp. It is belief in something of which we have no conception at all. Don't stare at me so wildly. I know my people. I have lived and suffered with them and for them and from them. I once shared their hopes, their ideas, their beliefs."

He paused and looked at me steadily for a few seconds. His last words were enigmatic, being so contradictory to his actions at first.

Then he resumed in a low tone: "These Russian Jewish students despise their ancestral belief; but to accept the more liberal and more human Christian religion in the land of tyranny would be degrading. The Jew likes to do everything voluntarily, but nothing under compulsion. He possesses the true spirit of the poet and the martyr. Coming over to this country and finding most of their countrymen in a deplorable condition, and on the other hand the 'reform' Jews, who are of the wealthier

class, repelling them, these young Russians have drifted away from both. The former would not assist them because they are irreligious, and the latter excuse themselves because they claim those Russians have too many ideas. Besides, reformed Judaism cannot attract these enlightened young men. That creed has no life, no vitality, neither as a religion nor as a philosophic theory; and its professors adhere to it from sheer fashion or perhaps because they fear the aversion of their Christian neighbours, who dislike infidels. Some of these young men, in fact, find some solace in Socialism. What are Anarchism and Socialism if not the impulses of ambition that fall short? Anarchism is no idea at all; it is merely the hatred that springs up in the breast of a stripped rival. When one loses in a race he is more likely to find fault with the winner for his own defeat than with himself. Hence Socialism and Anarchism.

“The only remedy for these intelligent young men is to adopt a new faith that will stream fresh blood, so to speak, in their veins and resuscitate them—I mean Christianity. They would also get some help from Christian philanthropists, and would continue to lead the life they had dreamed of in their native land.”

He stopped talking and cut the meat which the waiter had set before him.

I divined at last the secret of this masked being. He was a missionary. I had known many mission-

aries who had tried to win Jews to the Christian belief, and all of them I had despised. I noticed "he meant business," and I loathed him more for it. I did not attempt to reply to what he had said, however, but kept on eating my nine-cent meal.

"I know you," he resumed. "You are one of those students I pictured a little while ago. Your name is Isidor Russ."

I showed my surprise at this personal knowledge of me by half starting from my chair.

"There's nothing wonderful about my knowing you," he explained. "I'll be frank with you. I've seen you before; you interested me; I know some of your friends; I asked questions, and so I know much about you. I've been looking for a chance to meet you; I followed you here to-night.

"You were innocently convicted several weeks ago," he went on. "Who was at fault but the haughty Rabbi? It was not because he hated you individually; he hated your nationality. The wealthy American Jews are retaliating on their own poor coreligionists for the prejudice they suffer from the gentiles. They look down upon you Russians, with all your intelligence, unsurpassed liberality, and broadmindedness, and, if possible, ostracise you from their clubs and societies. But the American gentile has no such feeling. He would be willing to accept your company and friendship. In short, my friend, I can help you," he ended significantly, "and you will be able to earn

your livelihood easily and pursue your studies besides if you like."

He now arose to leave, and finding me silent said: "Think it over. My name is Gavniack. I'll see you to-morrow."

Saying this, he threw a ten-dollar bill upon the table and hurried out of the restaurant before I could stop him. I ran after him to return his money, but he was lost in the crowded street.

I realised that this man was a Jewish-Christian missionary who was fishing in the squalid Ghetto for Hebrew souls. Was he indeed a religious fakir, or was he honest in his belief? At the last he had certainly talked ardently and with the appearance of sincerity.

I brooded in my room for hours that night. I thought of my miserable health, of my poverty, of what I had suffered through the inhumanity of Rabbi Fuchs. And I thought of my future—ah, my future! That troubled me most. All the time the words of the missionary were repeating themselves in my mind: "You will be able to earn your livelihood and pursue your studies." Perhaps he was sincere. At any rate, he offered me hope. His promises were vague, but I had nothing to lose by investigation; and I must return his money. So I decided to see him again.

CHAPTER IX

THE MISSIONARY AGAIN

COMING home the following day, I found my landlady in tears. The youngest girl was sick, and she had not a cent with which to buy the prescribed medicine. I owed her a little over six dollars, but she did not even hint for it. However, I felt myself guilty of a gross wrong; the little girl might die for want of medicine, and I had money! I put my hand into my pocket and crumpled the ten-dollar bill, hesitating what to do. "It is not mine," I argued with myself; "how can I give it away?" "But the sick child might die," another thought protested.

I quickly drew out the money and handed it to the landlady, who was looking at her poor child with tearful eyes. "Here is your six dollars and fifteen cents. You will bring me the change."

She wiped away her tears and looked at me a trifle abashed, probably wondering how I came by that fortune.

"God knows the truth, I did not mean to press you," she apologised. "I know that you would have paid me long ago if you had only had it, but I was simply giving vent to my bitter heart."

Then I worried again because I had used the missionary's money. I began to walk the floor of my room restlessly. The walls, the ceiling, the very air of the enclosure put a certain burden, so to speak, upon my brain and nerves. I wished I could shake off everything from my mind. So I took a stroll through the dingy streets. Razovski's talk and the incident I had experienced with the Rabbi came back to my mind like a past dream. "Judaism is declining; reform Judaism is a sham and orthodoxy an absurdity; the Jews are hated by all, and the Russian Jews are prejudiced by the American and naturalised German Jews. For shame! I should beg of Jews to tolerate me. Jews that entertain prejudice against any of their brethren deserve no regard, no respect. I should rather starve in the streets of the liberal metropolis than apply for aid to the vain, wealthy merchant who would perhaps scoff and sneer at the despised Russian student before he would condescend to consider his tale of woe."

"What have I in common with the Jews?" I further asked myself. "Why not cut myself loose from these people? The Christians, indeed, have treated the Jews cruelly in the past, but what is that compared to the prejudice which the well-to-do American Jews have shown against the poor Russian refugees? No wrong is a wrong by itself; it is relatively measured by the required right. What have national or race connections to do with me?"

I am only a Jew by race, which is simply a term denoting bigotry. I am a philosopher, and true philosophy (not the narrow-minded philosophy of Bismarck) teaches that there is no race or nationality. Mankind in its broadest sense is our race and nationality, and the Chinaman is just as much mine or I his as the Jew. Whom shall I fight for? Why shall I curry the favour of some wealthy Jews when the whole world is before me?" "You will be able to earn your livelihood easily, and pursue your studies if you like"—the missionary's words flashed through my mind. "Why should I insist upon bearing this misnomer? What care I for ideas and ideals? They are merely the fruit of vapid brains. What difference is it to me what form of religion the Jews have, however much it may worry Razovski? What care I whether the German, American, or Austrian Jew bears prejudice against me or not, let the question grieve my friend as much as it may? Why should it hurt me more than any other intelligent person that Mr. Cohn, or Jewheimer, was ostracised from a certain club because his belief was different from that of the other members? Furthermore, the same Mr. Cohn, or Jewheimer, entertains prejudice against his less fortunate coreligionists and ostracises the Russian and 'Pullack' if he possibly can. The dog is not better than the cane that hits him. Nationality and religion are only relics from ancient barbarity, the terms of which have been coined and perpetuated by egoists and

bigots whose sole ambition was to enslave and subjugate others under their yoke. Then why should I suffer for an ancient fiction which injures my present existence? People like Razovski call it standing by their principles, but with me it has ceased to be a principle."

That night I went again to the nine-cent restaurant, but Gavniack did not appear, as his promise had led me to think he would. Every night for a week found me in the restaurant, but the missionary did not come. I inquired of the nine-cent restaurant keeper, but he knew nothing about him, he said, though the expression of his face told me a different story.

All this while I kept up a disheartened search for work, but no one wanted me. Razovski could not help me; he had neither influence nor money, so I did not ask him for assistance. The balance of the missionary's ten dollars gave out. Then my hunger discovered for me a new scheme. On the Bowery there were a number of cheap saloons which served free lunch to their patrons. As most of these saloons were always crowded, I found no trouble in sneaking by the lunch-counter and getting a little bite of the musty cheese and bread or a roll of cut meat without price. This practice I successfully pursued over a week until a fat bartender detected my petty thefts and punished me with a blow from his huge fist.

I continued to call daily at the nine-cent restau-

rant, but could find no clue to the missionary's whereabouts. Such are the contrasts in problematic life; we anxiously search one day for what we rejected the day preceding.

By this time I was disgusted with life. No one's path is strewn with roses, but when one loses the path altogether what hope is left? "Suicide is the easiest and best method to roll off the burden of life," I determined one afternoon while rambling aimlessly through the streets. "Why suffer from want of subsistence when we can make that want unnecessary? Why should I look for a remedy when I can escape the sickness? Once rid of what we call life, we find the end of all our troubles. It is like one carrying a heavy stone and complaining of its weight, when he could simply drop it and be released from its burden." I dwelt upon these thoughts often, but I realised that I was too weak, too cowardly. I lived because I could not die.

One cold December evening I visited the nine-cent restaurant, as usual, and waited there rather long, with a hope that the missionary might appear. And suddenly he opened the door.

He rubbed his hands as he came up to me. I resented his pious manner—I resented his appearance; but I was starving, and expected help from him.

He shook my hand warmly, and explained that he had been out of town ever since he saw me last, trying to organise a Christian-Jewish mission in a

small town in Connecticut. He invited me to go to a decent restaurant. I accepted his invitation.

When we had finished the meal, during which he drank heavily of wine, he said in Hebrew, in his lowest possible tone, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" and smiled an insinuating smile.

My answer stuck in my throat.

"I hope you have by this time appreciated the truth of my statements," he said. He puffed out a thick volume of smoke and looked straight at me with his little eyes, that betrayed the effect of the wine he had drunk.

"Come, let us go to some place where we can talk more freely," he said after I had continued in my silence for a minute or two. "And where we can get good wine," he added. "What did Luther say?—

" 'Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib, und Gesang,
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang.' "

Ha! ha! ha! It takes a poet to say that and a missionary to practise it. Ha! ha! ha! Come—we'll have a chat."

CHAPTER X

A CHAT WITH THE MISSIONARY

WE got on an elevated car at Grand Street and rode uptown. We alighted at the Fifty-ninth Street station and walked several blocks to a fashionable apartment house, in which he said he lived. In the small corridor he pressed one of a number of electric buttons, and somebody called through the speaking-tube.

"Open, Martha!" the missionary answered.

I heard a click, and he opened the door of the hall.

"One flight up," he said to me as he ran up the stairs. He led me up the one flight and knocked at a door. It was opened by a tall, well-shaped woman who smiled on Gavniack as we entered. It struck me that her smile was hardly the smile of a wife.

We went through a room which I noted in passing was expensively furnished, and entered a room that was half study, half smoking-room. This, like the adjoining room, had been furnished at much expense. There was a long, black leather couch and two arm-chairs; on the wall hung a good picture of the woman who had opened the door for us, and opposite it hung a picture of a beautiful little girl, who looked like the miniature of the woman. There

was also a small, well-filled book-case and a couple of well-executed pieces of marble.

He excused himself, but returned in a few minutes. He drew the two arm-chairs close together and placed a small round table between us. We had scarcely seated ourselves when the woman brought in some wine, oysters, and cigars, and placed them on the table. She looked at me keenly as she put the tray down, and a sudden warmth passed over my face.

He did not introduce me to her, so I concluded she was not his wife.

She was decidedly handsome, about thirty years old, I judged, with full milky cheeks, slightly tinged with crimson, thick, light-brown hair, and bluish eyes with an experienced look in them. Although I had always flattered myself upon being a good physiognomist, I could not at first tell her race or nationality. She looked like a charming young *Bauerin*, full of rustic fascination. However, after close observation I discerned, by her profile and meditative glance, that she must have Jewish blood in her veins.

She closed the door after her when she left, and Gavniack glanced at me through the corner of his eye—a little suspiciously, I thought, though he feigned to be looking at the picture opposite him.

He filled both of our glasses and said: "Drink. 'Wine makes glad the heart of man,'" quoting the Psalm in the original. "The Psalmist, like

Luther, appreciated the mission of Bacchus—hey?”

“Wine enters and secrets come out,” I thought, but I said nothing.

He sipped from his glass slowly and eyed me while I followed his example. He was already much the worse for wine. “Did not Jesus bring salvation on earth?” he laughed, and gobbled a raw oyster down his throat. “I am sure he was my Redeemer”—winking. “Religion is a milch-cow, friend, if you pursue it in the right way. Enlightenment? Nonsense!” he ejaculated, answering an imaginary question. “Cattle will always need a herdsman, but the herdsman must not be blind.” Here he winked again. “Wine, woman, and song—what a glorious combination! Ha! ha! ha!”

“Why do you look so stiff and reserved, Mr. Russ? [He did not know my real name.] You wonder, perhaps, what I want you for. Nothing bad, I assure you. I shall not even ask you to see the font”—a cloud passed over my face—“you will reciprocate my favours in another way.

“You think I do not know you,” he continued after a short pause. “I know Razovski and almost every intelligent Russian in this city. I am fishing for them all the time. Razovski thinks the world of you, and that’s one reason I’m going to offer you so much for almost nothing. Oh, I know you all. I watch all of you. I am like the legendary Elijah. I appear in different shapes and forms, as fits the

occasion. One time I am an orthodox rabbi, another time a *Schnorrer*; sometimes a Russian refugee looking for intelligent countrymen, and another time I become a prince enjoying my wine, women, and song—ha! ha! ha!” His eyes flashed and danced quickly; perspiration rolled down his high forehead.

“I could not do anything with that idealist, Razovski,” he went on. “Our profession needs young men like him, and he is worth his weight in gold. But no inducement could bribe him. [My heart throbbed with shame.] An idealist is the best tool for our profession, for those idealists generally run from one extreme to the other. We need new blood now. Our best patrons are now losing faith in us, and if this keeps on much longer we may be played out. The infidels on one side and the poor on the other are liable to wrest the food from our mouths. In ancient times baptism was looked upon with unspeakable horror by the Jews, but of late it has become rather fashionable.” He smiled a self-adulating grin. “Those Jews of greatest talent and genius have tried to wash their birth off with the sacred water of the font.”

“But they have not succeeded,” I remarked.

“Well, the witty Heine and rebellious Börne found it a necessity in their time,” he answered, evading my remark.

“But don’t you know that this was the cause of the animosity between these two geniuses? Heine

despised Börne for his hypocrisy, and the latter bitterly and sarcastically ridiculed the former for his selfishness."

"That is the Jew all over," Gavniack laughed, and swung his rocking-chair rapidly to and fro. "Every Jew justifies his own mistakes and condemns his brother for committing the same." He paused a few minutes and sipped from his glass, which he had replenished frequently, and looked at the lighted cigar that lay upon the edge of the ash-receiver sending up a fine blue curl of smoke.

"However, I find no fault either with Heine or Börne," he resumed. "For in spite of their muse-worship they retained the principles of political economy. I mean that of gain. Gain is the electric current that makes the world run.

"Now, let us come to a clear understanding as to what I ask of you in return for the assistance I offer." He assumed a businesslike air. "I know that you are well versed in Hebrew literature, and you are able to dig out some necessary information from the Talmud, Kabbala, and so forth. Besides, your knowledge of the four principal European languages will be of some help to me. In short, all I ask of you is a little elucidation on theological topics. To be frank with you, I have neither the time nor the requisite knowledge to investigate these subjects for myself. I have helped many Russian students, and they are officiating in large Christian churches. But I have no more use for them—

none whatever. But I got paid for them, all right." This last he said half to himself.

He spoke in a cool, businesslike tone, just as if he were hiring me to keep a set of books.

"I tell you," he proceeded, "there will be a great future for you if you will give up your notion of finishing your medical course and become one of us. Your information will bring you a fortune. You have the equipment to make a great success. Most of our missionaries are ignoramuses, but the benevolent Christians don't know the difference. They are so glad to get a Jewish convert who will proselyte among the Jews that they trouble themselves very little about his knowledge. Some of the emigrants, however, have spoiled our business horribly. It was discovered that some received baptismal fees here in New York, sold their dead souls in several western cities, and finally returned to their old faith. That is outrageous—they are ruining us!

"Well, it is then agreed between us: you will furnish us with some material for our Jewish-Christian periodical. I am one of the editorial staff. Your work will consist in making abstracts from Jewish books or papers. For instance, when a Jewish editor complains of Jewish indifference toward their religion, make an abstract of this article and send it to us. It makes spicy stuff for our paper. We'll speak about this some other time. As to your payment, things will be fixed so you can pursue your study of medicine. I have a

letter of recommendation for you from Doctor P—— to the dean of the —— Medical College. It is early in the term, and you will be able to commence at once. You agree?"

I dropped my eyes; shame almost choked me. He laid down on the table the letter of recommendation, twenty-five dollars and the address of a family with whom I could get board; for he, certain of my acceptance, had made all arrangements.

"You agree?" he repeated.

My soul revolted at this business. But it was this or starvation. I nodded my head.

At this he rose. I took this as a sign that he was through with me and said I would have to go. As I passed through the other room I noticed the beautiful young woman stretched on a sofa. She appeared very graceful in the shaded light, but care and worry were chiselling on her brow and around the corners of her mouth.

CHAPTER XI

AN OLD FRIEND AGAIN

A YEAR glided by without any incidents worth putting on paper. I reviewed my medical studies, and, by hard work on my part and by considerable leniency on the part of the college authorities, I was enabled to enter the senior class the following autumn. That year made a marked change in me. Another resurrection, so to speak—a new spring after my long, dreary winter. My almost withered and insipid brain regained fresh vigour. I was filled with new hope, new energy, and happy visions came before me. I was alive once more. And the thirst for study and reading assumed its power over me.

During that year I came in contact very little with the missionary Gavniack, nor did I see Razovski. With the former I generally corresponded, enclosing my abstracts, and the latter I was ashamed to meet. I felt guilty, and a guilty conscience fears the look of the innocent. When my conscience rebuked me in the silence of night, when sentiments of truth and integrity stirred within me, when tears washed my cheeks because of the base hypocritical means by which I was earning my livelihood, I would try

to excuse myself by saying that there was nothing wrong in my work itself—there would be no wrong in merely translating and making abstracts from the Koran, which was all I did. The wrong was done by those who made use of my work with insincere purpose.

But such justification comforted me little. I realised I was playing a base part, and all my powers of reasoning could not help me to escape a feeling of shame. And when I thought of Katia my shame would grow into anguish. What would she, with her purity and lofty ideas, think of me if she knew I was gaining my livelihood by such dishonest means? But my very love for Katia also influenced me in holding to this work. I wished to finish my medical course as soon as possible, in order that I might be free to search for her, and that I might have something to offer her when found—for the hope of meeting her again still clung to my mind.

As I have said, I saw but little of Gavniack. I had not met him for six months, when one afternoon in the spring, while I was out for a stroll, I met him by chance on Fifth Avenue, accompanied by a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome young man. A glance—and this young man and I pounced on each other and began shaking hands.

“Dolgoff!” I ejaculated.

“Ivan Petrowitch!” he cried, addressing me by the name in the passport he had furnished me in Vilno.

Gavniack shrank back a step or two. It was evident he found no pleasure in the discovery of friendship between Dolgoff and me. "You seem to know one another?" he said.

"We're old friends," replied Dolgoff in his gay, resonant voice.

While we were exchanging news about ourselves Gavniack interrupted to remind his companion that if they lingered any longer they would be late at the meeting of missionaries which was to take place that afternoon.

Dolgoff excused himself, saying he would rather spend the time chatting with me. Gavniack hesitated a minute or two, then bade us farewell, and Dolgoff and I went to my lodging.

He was a trifle changed, but was as handsome as ever. He was now still better developed, and his soft black hair, black eyes of the Jewish type, and in all his beaming countenance showed the same contentment as in former days. His smooth-shaven face had that physical beauty which is rarely seen in the face of poets or thinkers.

I offered Dolgoff a pipe, took one myself, and we began to indulge in reminiscences. There are some persons that make themselves at home wherever they come; Dolgoff was one of those. Generally such people never have a permanent home, and having lived a vagrant life they can easily adapt themselves to circumstances.

"So you have become a missionary?" I said, re-

ferring to his present occupation. "How did you come to that Gavniack?"

"Ha! ha! ha! I a missionary!" He laughed heartily, crossing his legs and puffing mouthfuls of smoke. "It *is* queer, isn't it? In Russia I fooled government fools. Here I fool God's fools. Life is full of foolery." He laughed again. "We live to fool one another, or rather we fool one another in order to live. Either you fool somebody else or somebody else fools you. The success of life is the success one has in fooling as many fools as he possibly can. As to that Gavniack, I knew him in London; I knew him in Kieff; I knew him in Vilno; I knew him—ha! ha! I have known him long enough, and it is because I know him so well that I got this position. He is a shark in his line; he beats the whole missionary clique."

"But what induced you to take this step?" I further inquired. Not that I was so much interested in him as that I wished to squeeze from him something concerning Gavniack. I detested Gavniack, and yet I wanted to know all I could concerning him.

"The same inducement that made you take the step," he said; at which I felt my blood ascending to my face. "I was confined in prison about a year, but I finally succeeded in escaping. First I went to Holland, but I could not find any work to suit me. One thing was too hard, another too easy, and so forth. I was soon helpless and starving. But

God has never forsaken me altogether." He smiled. "I came in contact with a missionary who began to fish for my soul. It did not take me long to strike a bargain with him, and I got the best of it. For my soul was worth very little, and my body was the whole world to me. I lived six months in luxury and got some money to boot for my worthless soul.

"But I soon tired of Amsterdam and went to Hamburg. I had a little experience in the business, and thought I could speculate with my soul again. I had never before appreciated what a valuable soul I possessed." He puffed out a volume of smoke and chuckled with some satisfaction. "In that God-fearing city the price of my soul trebled. I got several hundred for it from my godfather, who had a big belly and a small brain, and I also got some money from the missionaries. It never rains but it pours. A nice Christian girl fell in love with my black eyes and curly hair, and she was frank enough to tell me so. I did not object. Who would? A girl is a girl. She was so innocent, so girlish, that I could have taken her to the end of the world had I chosen. She believed in me as in the Saviour. A short time afterward I got tired of her love and kisses and skipped to London, with the intention of taking up some honest trade. In fact, I wished to repent. But the idling missionary life had got its hold on me, and I changed my mind. Well, speculation with my soul is not bad, after

all, I thought. I soon found another customer for it. He was very religious and charitable (the latter proved beneficial to me). At his home I met this Gavniack. His name was Gordon then, but I had known him by his former names; he had many. I had known him so well in the past that he thought it wise to give me a friendly reception. At that time he introduced me to several members of his fraternity, as he called it, and my position was assured. Wine, cigars, theaters, good meals, and everything I could desire I received without a stroke of work. On Saturday afternoons I used to go down with him to Whitechapel, where he preached to the Jews. I was one of his associates for a while, and we all prospered.

“One of his associates was a minister of a rich congregation, a Jew by birth. He was baptised at a very early age, and, unlike other Jewish converts, he was faithful to his adopted creed. He loved the people of his race, and believed that their only salvation would come through Christ. A Jewish convert to Christianity was a precious being to him. Gavniack, with his flattery, won the confidence of that noble minister, but that sly fox did not care so much for the clergyman as for his beautiful daughter, Martha.”

“Martha!” I interrupted, thinking of the woman I had seen in Gavniack’s apartment a year before.

He read my thought “Yes; she’s with him

here." A look of pain came upon his face, and he was silent for a minute.

"What can a girl know of sin and corruption?" he continued. "It is the unsuspicious that are ensnared by the wicked. That contemptible wretch won the heart of that virtuous maiden as easily as he had won the women before her. One day Gavniack and Martha disappeared. She, of course, did not know he was married. The flight of his child threw the old minister into an apoplectic fit which proved fatal. I think Mrs. Gordon was forced by her poverty to become a washerwoman.

"I pursued my missionary trade in London till about six months ago, when I desired to come to America and begin an honourable life. I arrived in this city with a moderate capital, with the sole intention of starting some honest trade. However, fate, it seems, predestined for me to remain in the same business a little longer. A few weeks after I arrived here I met this contemptible Gordon, or, as he calls himself here, Reverend Gavniack. He tried to sneak away, but it was too late. At first I felt like punching his sheepish, hypocritical face, 'but,' I thought, 'he is a sly fox, and I must handle him differently.'"

He paused and looked away from me. After a minute he continued, his voice somewhat husky:

"To be frank with you, Israel, I loved Martha—even after she had disgraced herself by running away with Gavniack. I made up my mind to

handle him softly and find out about Martha myself. A few months passed by, and he was cunning enough to conceal her whereabouts from me. In the meantime I thought it was foolish to refuse his money. He is a clever missionary—that we cannot deny. His face, his low, musical voice, his shy look, his humble demeanour—everything about him shows qualifications for his profession. He is a genius in that field.

“Finally, however, I found her out. He keeps her in a luxurious cage, and she is afraid to fly away, though I discovered that she hates him dreadfully. He brings everything to the house, but he is careful not to give her any money. She is his slave and fears him. About three months after she had left London she gave birth to a child, and he got rid of it, I don’t know how. What a change there is in that woman! She is about twenty-three years old, and she looks as if she were thirty.”

I could clearly see, from the expression of his face and the tone of his voice as he spoke of Martha, that he was deeply moved.

“He certainly is a dastardly villain!” I exclaimed, partly as an expression of my loathing of Gavniack, partly as an expression of my sympathy for Dolgoff.

“The devil’s even blacker than I have painted him,” Dolgoff added somewhat bitterly. “He was a Russian spy for a while, and he has sent hundreds of honourable people to Siberia. And I’ve heard it rumoured that he killed his own father.”

I started like one bitten by an asp. I recalled what Dolgoff had said in Kieff regarding my resemblance to an old friend of his. A horrible suspicion had flashed into my mind. I dared not follow it further. I quivered with fear at this suggestive thought. Fortunately, Dolgoff's face was turned away, so he did not see how his words had affected me; and when he left, a few minutes later, he was so engrossed with his own unhappy thoughts that he evidently noticed nothing unusual in my appearance.

CHAPTER XII

THE WORLD IS QUITE SMALL, AFTER ALL

THE evening of the next day Gavniack called upon me. His visit at first surprised me, for he had not been in my room for a year. However, I soon divined from his desultory talk that he had come to sound me, to find out if Dolgoff had not spoken to me regarding him. But I kept close guard upon myself and evaded all his dexterous questions.

He had risen to leave, when he remarked very casually: "By the bye, I met an old friend recently that I never expected to see in this country. I happened to speak of him to Dolgoff last night, and he said you knew him, too."

"Who is he?" I asked mechanically, hardly having heard what he said, for within I was a chaos of fear and sickening suspicion.

"I think you knew him in Kieff—Bialnick's his name."

"What!" I cried. And suspicion and fear for the time left me and I had but one thought—Katia!

Gavniack's look was suddenly fastened upon me.

"It seems you are very much interested in this aristocratic fugitive."

I controlled myself with a great effort. "I was very much interested in him before the massacre of the Jews in '81. He showed himself a great friend of the Jews, and he supported the Jewish emancipation movement with all his might."

A peculiar smile played about Gavniack's lips. "I knew him long before that," he rejoined, and with an ironical chuckle he added: "He was no friend of the Jews then—far from it."

"I think I'll look him up," I said, assuming an air of indifference. "Where's he living?"

Gavniack gave me Judge Bialnick's address. He continued to chat for a few minutes, but I had no interest in his talk—my mind was with Katia. I had almost forgotten his presence, when I became aware that he had picked up from the table the Hebrew Bible my mother had given me on her death-bed.

"I see you are still a good Jew," he said jovially.

"The book is an heirloom," I answered.

"H'm! The book does look rather old." And so saying he began to turn the leaves to the first part of the book, where our family history was written.

My heart began to beat violently—I could feel it throb in my ears, in my throat; my brain was whirling. I turned and tottered to the window, and stood there unnerved, trembling, all in a daze. I vaguely heard some words in a strange, hoarse

voice; I saw, as if through a mist, a pair of ghastly eyes staring in my direction; then the door clicked. When I turned about he had gone.

CHAPTER XIII

“THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED”

I SPENT a long, sleepless night. Strange thoughts haunted my brain. As soon as I would begin to think of Katia horrible incidents would crowd my mind. “Perhaps it was Providence that separated me from the daughter of my father’s slayer? Perhaps it was Providence that put us asunder because I am a Jew and she a Christian?” I brooded superstitiously. But instantly my deep love for Katia filled me with different thoughts. “What do the terms Christian and Jew denote, after all? I love nature; I love art; I love humanity. What can any religion teach me in addition to these principles? Must I profess a certain creed when these three passions embrace all creeds and something more—unsophisticated brotherhood? A philosopher is a philosopher—neither Jew nor Christian; or rather he is both. To belong to a certain creed is to confine philosophy in narrow compass. To abjure creed and believe in nature, art, humanity is to extend philosophy to its utmost capacity. Creeds are the ladders by which mankind ascends to philosophy—to truth. The top once reached, the ladder may be kicked away as a thing past usefulness.” “But

you are a child of martyrs," a weird-like voice whispered to me. Oh, martyrdom! It is only a barbaric term for heroism; the civilised idea of heroism is to follow the stream, not swim against it. Broader minds comprise martyrdom in fanaticism. To expose oneself to suffering and torture for an idea may be regarded by some a virtue, but there are worthier things in life on which to spend virtue. Virtue is scarce nowadays, and we must use it sparingly."

Thus I mused till the cheerful morning sun dispersed the misty shroud that hovered about me. I then put on my best clothes and repaired to Judge Bialnick, whose address Gavniack had given me. I found it to be a fashionable residence on Madison Avenue.

I rang the bell and a servant appeared almost instantly.

"Is Judge Bialnick in?" I asked.

"Yes. Who shall I say wants to see him?"

"A gentleman from Kieff," I replied evasively.

The servant disappeared, and a moment later returned and showed me into a small library. In a large leather arm-chair sat a feeble-looking, white-haired man, with a bloodless face. He rose to greet me, but he evidently did not recognise me. As I came close to him, however, he stretched out both his hands, and a flood of cheer seemed to spread over his pallid countenance.

"Russakoff!" he cried.

"Where have you kept yourself?" I asked when the first greeting was over, anxious for some reference to Katia. "I searched with torches through every country in Europe and could not find a trace of you."

"We stayed in Switzerland and France most of the time," he answered in a very weak voice, "but I finally decided to end my days in this great land of freedom."

"And Katia?" I asked with a throbbing heart.

"What an old rascal I am to keep you from Katia!" he exclaimed, smiling broadly.

He summoned a servant. "Tell Katia a gentleman from Kieff is here."

Then turning to me, he said with the joy of a child playing a prank upon another: "You hide yourself behind that curtain. Let *me* break the news to her."

I secreted myself, as he desired, behind a curtain that hung in the doorway connecting the library with another room, and awaited her coming with my eyes at the curtain's edge.

Presently she appeared. She was dressed all in black. As I gazed at her through eyes blinded with warm tears I thought she looked like a queen in exile. She was the same Katia—a trifle thinner, a trifle paler, but even more sweetly beautiful than when fate had swept us apart several years before.

"A gentleman from Kieff was here a while ago," the Judge said in answer to her questioning glance

about the room. "He will be back soon. Guess who he is!"

She shook her head and, smiling sadly, answered: "How can I guess, father? We had so many friends in Kieff."

"The gentleman," the old man continued playfully, "told me he had met Doctor Russakoff—he is a doctor now."

I clenched the curtain feverishly. She started, trembled, and her colour began to come and go.

"A—what—a——" she quavered.

"Come, my soul." He slipped his arm about her and drew her down upon the arm of his chair. "What would you give if I should bring him here—at once?" he asked softly, moving his weak eyes in the direction of my concealment.

Katia caught her father around the neck and leaned her face against his cheek. "Oh, father, don't trifle with me! Do you know anything?"

"Would it not be great," he continued, "if, as in Arabian tales, I could produce him here by the mere mentioning of his name? Let me raise my wand and——"

I could not stand this fairy-tale nonsense longer, and throwing the curtain aside I strode to the middle of the room.

"Katia!" I cried.

She sprang to her feet and turned about. Judge Bialnick slipped out of the room.

"Katia!" I cried again, the longing of four years in my voice.

She opened her arms wide to me. "Israel! Oh, Israel!" she murmured, as I clasped her to my breast.

CHAPTER XIV

THE END OF TWO LIVES

THE following few weeks Katia and I were the happiest people in the world. My college work was practically finished, so I was free to be with her morning, afternoon, and evening, and her presence made me forget all else.

During the period I had been away from the tragic life of the East Side I had begun to appreciate the spirit of this country, and this appreciation soon ripened to that love and admiration which surpass all native patriotism. I now cherished only one ideal—to settle with my beloved Katia in purely American atmosphere. After a great deal of discussion between ourselves and a long consultation with friends, we decided to locate in some southern town where there was promise of my building up a lucrative practice. And with this purpose in view I made an extensive trip through the South, and discovered just the place of our desire.

On my return to New York I found among the letters awaiting me the following note, in a nervous, scrawling hand:

"Dear Doctor Russakoff: I am sick in bed

at B—— Hospital. I am miserable, wretched, and suffer beyond endurance. I am afraid this will be my end. Come as soon as you get this note. I must tell you something very serious.

“GAVNIACK.”

The letter was dated several days before. I wondered what might have happened to him since then, and without first going to see my beloved Katia I hastened to B—— Hospital. There I was told that he had attempted to take his life, and before he recovered from his illness he fell sick with typhoid fever complicated by pneumonia, and that there was a slim chance of his lasting through the night.

I was ushered to a private room and given a chair beside Gavniack's bed. He lay stretched out on his back, his mouth open, breathing heavily. The low-burning light in the room added grimness to the patient's emaciated face and dark-bluish arteries on his forehead.

There is such a close affinity between human beings that, no matter how much we hate one in good health, our sympathies are aroused on finding him on his death-bed. I had loathed this man, but now, at sight of his slipping into eternity, I was moved to compassion.

He began to roll about restlessly and to talk incoherently. Suddenly he opened his eyes and fixed them glaringly upon me, and he gave utterance to his raving in a flesh-creeping voice: “Oh, Martha! Martha! Martha! look at me—look—I did

not murder your father—did you not love me?—ah, that Dolgoff—he told you everything—carried you away—oh, Dolgoff—my money—everything—but give me back—Martha—look at her eyes, her milky cheeks, her—Martha—Mar——”

He raved and talked in frightful tones that made me stir in my seat. Then he broke off and his raving took another turn: “I felt it all the time—the very image of mother—[some indistinct babbling here]. Don’t, Israel—don’t marry her—there hangs our father—look how he stares at us—those eyes drive me crazy—I killed him—Bialnick did it—Bialnick—oh, take that cross away—ah, that cross, that—cross—Israel—throw away that cross—father is nailed to it—ah, that cross—that cro——”

His words became indistinct again, then ceased. His breath was now coming with difficulty. I was damp with cold sweat; my brain was whirling with the tragedies of my life.

Half an hour later he opened his eyes. There was consciousness in them. A tremor passed through his body, and with an effort he moved one emaciated hand over the counterpane toward me.

“Isroelke,” he murmured feebly.

“Joseph,” I answered, taking his hand. My eyes began to overflow with hot tears.

That was his only lucid moment. The next instant his hand tightened convulsively upon mine and he began to rave again.

“Don’t you see father’s face there—nailed to the

cross? The Christians did it—they crucified father—they'll crucify you—Bialnick did it—you'll not marry her—I am a villain—I fooled the whole world—everybody—everybody—but I am a Jew—you are a Jew—once a Jew always—a Jew—don't marry her——” He struggled up on one elbow and stared wildly in front of him. “Look—look—father—mother—on the cross—*Shma—Isroel—adenoi—Elo—heinu—adenoichod-d-d—*”*

He fell back in my arms, gasping. An hour later he lay motionless, quiet—dead.

It was a little before daybreak when I left the hospital. The scene I had just witnessed stupefied my brain for a while; then recollections of the remote past began to come back to my mind as I walked home, thinking and breathing deeply, with a vague hope of waking and finding that I had only dreamed. But I soon realised that I had had no dream; my brother's cutting words still rang in my ears.

I opened my room quietly; I feared my own footsteps. A silvery glance of the fading, vanishing moon fell upon my desk. There lay the dog-eared Bible. My thoughts again travelled to my brother's delirious talk; I shuddered at his suggestion. Gradually my mind came back to Katia, and the old battle of creed and race and vengeance raged in my breast. “Why did fate bring us together?” I wondered why I put myself this question. “Don't

* Hear, O Israel! God is our Lord—God is one.

marry her—don't marry her." My brother's words passed through my mind. "The blood of your father's murderer runs in her veins," a weird voice seemed to whisper. And instantly a new feeling was sprouting within me. That feeling or affinity which binds the Jew to his race, to his creed when all other hopes forsake him, was waking in my heart. "Once a Jew always a Jew." My brother's words again haunted me.

I arose and walked across the room. All around was dead silence; only at intervals the clattering of the elevated trains was heard, and then silence again. I felt weary, and the burden of life weighed heavily upon me. In a moment the structure of my happiness seemed to be razed to the ground and buried me under its *débris*. My heart was embittered, wretched, crushed.

Then I noticed on the floor a letter which had evidently been thrust under my door after I had left for the hospital. I picked it up with a fretful heart. It was a note from Katia. She said that her father was dying, and asked me to come as soon as I reached town. And forgetting all else, I hurried to my beloved.

When I knocked at Judge Bialnick's apartment Katia herself opened the door. "*Bosje moi!* papa is dying!" she cried, and fell into my arms.

"What's the matter with him, dearest?" I asked.

"His heart. It's been weak for years, you know."

"Has he been sick long?"

"He was quite well last night. But a man came in to see papa last night. Papa knew him in Kieff. He left a letter which he said a friend in a hospital had asked him to deliver, and then went away. I was not in the room when papa read the letter, but when I came in a little later he was unconscious in his chair. The letter was from a man who says he's your brother. Do you think that would have affected him so?"

I shook my head. I saw clearly the hand that struck this blow.

Katia led me into the chamber where her father lay struggling for life. The attending physician rose to leave. As he was going out he whispered to me: "His minutes are numbered. I have been staying here for her sake."

A glance at the aged patient convinced me of the truth of the physician's statement. He was unconscious; his long, thin, silvery hair was scattered over the pillows; his face was wan and calm; and his breath came fast and short. Katia fell on her knees at his bedside, took one of his hands in both hers, and sobbed brokenly. I took a seat beside the bed opposite Katia and gazed fixedly at the cold, wax-like face.

Shortly after daybreak the patient opened his eyes and turned them toward me. I leaned over the

bed and felt his pulse. His eyes opened, closed, and opened again. Something like a shudder passed over his wrinkled countenance; his wrist trembled in my hand. He glanced from me to Katia and stirred as if he wished to rise and utter something. A flush of scarlet tinged his bloodless cheeks as he glanced at me. He stirred again. His arm trembled, his whole body quivered, a gleam like that of sunshine lightened his deadly looking eyes. With a sudden effort, half rising, he clasped my hand, and placing it upon Katia's he gasped: "Israel—forgive!"

Our hands remained clasped together long after he had drawn his last breath. Katia, with her face down, did not seem to realise that the end had come. I sat motionless, fearing to arouse her. Suddenly something like an electric shock passed through my mind. It only lasted a few seconds, but in that brief space of time my whole life flitted through my mind. The tragedy of the two lives that had passed away on this night added colour to my mystic imagination. The last words of my brother rang clamorously in my ears; the terrible episodes of my life stood out vividly before my mind's eye; many fragments of recollections came in a common flood—the lives of Bialnick and Joseph stood before me side by side—and in them I saw the weakness, the mortality, the littleness of man. The errors of these men seemed to me like links of a great

chain—the endless chain of faith, of nature, of God. All history unrolled itself before me, and it, too, was a part of that great chain. Then like a flash of lightning a revelation flashed upon me—the revelation of my people, the revelation of my father and of his father, and the revelation of my own life.

This revelation came to me almost as a dream, as a vision; it interpreted to me the mystery of my people. Side by side the life of the Crucified and the life of my race among nations and the life of my father and my own strange life—in a vision they all presented themselves before me. And this vision, this revelation, showed me the symbolism of my race, the symbolism of the Christ. It showed me that the Crucified was the symbol of His people as my father was of his generation and as I am of mine. It showed me that not the Pilgrims, not the Crusaders, not the followers of Him whom they called Saviour—none but the fugitive race are the eternal bearers of the cross.

The next instant, when this mystic vision had vanished, I became conscious of the clasp of Katia's hand, I beheld her pure soul in the innocent look of her luminous eyes, and again the past flashed through my mind with lightning rapidity. But the past now revealed to me a different symbol—the symbolism of the innocent blood—the symbolism of Katia's life and mine.

“Katia,” I whispered softly, glancing at the

corpse before us, "let the dead past bury the dead. We are the innocent blood."

She gazed at me meaninglessly; she knew nothing of the tragedy of her father's life—she was innocent.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST GLIMPSE

BEFORE turning over the last leaf of my history I read over this narrative, and I have been struck with its brokenness, its lack of order, its coincidences. At first I thought this was a fault in my narrative, but after a little scrutiny I know it is a fault in life; for life is not a logical procession of events as novelists present it. It is sometimes broken, incoherent, and at other times chance makes events fit, coincide. In real life people come and go; acquaintances meet and separate; the friends of to-day are not seen to-morrow. In this record of my experiences friends have appeared only to disappear. Such is life.

Perhaps during their brief stay in these pages my friends have aroused enough interest to warrant at least a few words concerning their after life. So, at least, I shall presume.

My friends, like myself, fugitives from the land of bondage, now enjoy the liberty of our glorious country; they, too, have thriven in the great land of freedom. In place of the "sweat-shop" has arisen the prosperous clothing factory of Levando & Son, who are of the most prominent in one of the

western States. The father's hair has turned gray, but there is still the twinkle of hopeful youth in his bluish eyes; and even Gittele smiles when her husband sings the praises of the Stars and Stripes. Daniel has become a well-known lawyer, and chiefly through him Mark Fetter was forced into bankruptcy a few years ago. Dolgoff married Martha, and this change in his life has developed a certain amount of stability in his character; he is now at the head of a branch of a life insurance company in Chicago. As for Ephraim Razovski, if you are a reader of popular magazines you have undoubtedly noticed many articles and short stories bearing his name—all characteristic of his restless, fiery spirit. And Malke—she is a happy mother in a large and happy family, and her last child was named Nathan, after her father, who had died a year before.

Now for a few last words about myself. Since my life has been united with that of my beloved Katia nothing has occurred to mar our happy existence. I have been successful in my profession, and also in gaining the respect and friendship of my good American neighbours. We live in harmony with God and man.

I still have my literary aspirations, and still frequently scribble verses, which my sweet Katia values as highly as those of Pushkin and of Lermontoff. But she is a biased critic; and to judge from public recognition my efforts have been attended with only meager success.

Not infrequently, however, a bit of cloud darkens the sky of my happiness. Recollections of the bitter past recur to my mind; the groans of my people from tyrannical Russia, from Morocco, from France, occasionally reach my ears. Then I suffer with the down-trodden race as if I still lived among them in some barricaded Ghetto.

The other day my eldest son, whose seventh birthday we soon hope to celebrate, came crying into the house because the boy of a neighbour called him Jew. Katia adjusted his cap and said: "Hush! sweetheart. You must not quarrel with Robert." "But he calls me Jew even if I don't quarrel with him," the innocent little martyr justified himself.

When the child was out of the room Katia turned to me with a sorrowful look. As our eyes met, one common thought flitted through our brains. I bowed my head in pain. Pretending not to be hurt by the injustice our boy had suffered, she came up to me and, throwing her arm around me, whispered in a very low, consoling tone: "Israel, what troubles you?"

I pressed her to my breast, and pushing back her luxuriant hair from her forehead I impressed a kiss upon her brow and answered: "The cross, my love—the cross I bear weighs heavily upon me."

She divined my thought, and with tears gathering in her beautiful eyes locked my neck in a tight

embrace, and putting her cheek against mine murmured: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

